

THE

LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

Carnavalet Edition

NEWLY RE-EDITED, REVISED AND CORRECTED,
INCLUDING OVER THREE HUNDRED
LETTERS NOT PREVIOUSLY
TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH

IN SEVEN VOLUMES

VOLUME VI

The Carnavalet Edition of

The Letters

of

Madame de Sévigné

is in seven volumes, and is limited to fifteen hundred and fifty numbered sets. The number of each set is in the first volume.



Tiré du Cabinet de Mr. C. F. A. de Mussey *Gravé par Lorieux*

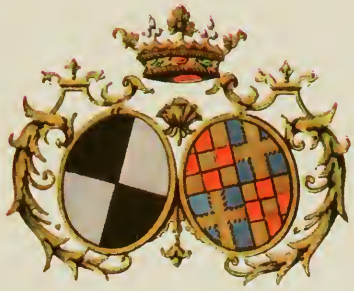
THE ABBEY AT LIVRY, NEAR PARIS.

THE

LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ



WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

A. EDWARD NEWTON

PHILADELPHIA

J. P. HORN & COMPANY

1927

COPYRIGHT, 1927,
J. P. HORN & CO.

Printed in the United States of America.

CONTENTS

OF THE SIXTH VOLUME

PAGE

LETTER NUMBER 753 1

THE LETTERS IN THIS VOLUME

Number 753 to Number 922

PERIOD

December 13th, 1686, to August 28th, 1689.

ILLUSTRATIONS

IN THE SIXTH VOLUME

View of the Abbey at Livry, near Paris . .	*Frontispiece*
	TO FACE PAGE
Another View of the Abbey at Livry . . .	100
View of "The Rocks," Brittany	300

THE LETTERS OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

*LETTER 753

From Madame la Marquise DE SÉVIGNÉ
to the President DE MOULCEAU.

Paris, December 13, 1686.

I wrote you a long letter, Sir, more than a month ago, full of friendship, secrets, and confidence. I know not what became of it; it lost its way, perhaps, in seeking for you at the States, since you have not answered it; but this will not prevent me from telling you a melancholy, and at the same time a pleasing, piece of intelligence; the death of the Prince, which happened the day before yesterday, the eleventh instant, at a quarter after seven in the evening; and the return of the Prince de Conti to Court, through the kindness of the Prince, who asked this favour of the King in his last moments: the King immediately granted it, and the Prince had this consolation on his death-bed; but never was joy drowned in so many tears. The Prince de Conti is inconsolable at the loss he has sustained; it could not be greater, particularly as he passed the whole time of his disgrace at Chantilly, where he made an admirable use of the understanding and abilities of the Prince, and drew, from the fountain-head, all that was to be acquired from so great a master, by whom he was tenderly beloved. The Prince flew, with a speed that has cost

* Letters with an asterisk have not been previously translated.

him his life, from Chantilly to Fontainebleau, when Madame de Bourbon was seized with the small-pox, in order to prevent the Duc, who had not had the disorder, from nursing her, and being with her; for the Duchesse, who has always nursed her, would have been sufficient to satisfy him of the care that was taken of her health. He was very ill, and at length died of an oppression with which he was seized, which made him say, as he was on the point of returning to Paris, that he should take a much longer journey. He sent for his confessor, Father Deschamps, and, after lying in a state of insensibility for twenty-four hours, and receiving all the sacraments, he died, regretted and bitterly lamented by his family and his friends: the King was much afflicted at the event, and, in short, the grief of losing so great a man, and so great a hero, whose place whole ages will not be able to supply, has been felt by all ranks. A singular circumstance happened three weeks ago, a little before the departure of the Prince for Fontainebleau. Vernillon, one of his gentlemen, returning from the chase at three o'clock, saw, as he approached the Château, at one of the windows of the armoury, an apparition, that is, a man who had been dead and buried: he dismounted, and came nearer; he still saw it; his valet, who was with him, said, "I see the same, Sir, that you see." Vernillon had been silent, that his valet might speak of his own accord: they entered the Château together, and desired the keeper to give them the key of the armoury: the keeper went with them; they found all the windows closed, and a silence which had been undisturbed for more than six months. This was told to the Prince: he appeared struck with it at first, and afterwards laughed at it. Everyone heard the story, and trembled for the Prince: you see what the event has been. Vernillon is said to be a man of strong understanding, and as little visionary as our friend Corbinelli could be; and the same apparition was seen by the servant. As this story is true, I send it you, that you may make your own reflections upon it, as we have done.

Since this letter was begun I have seen Briole, who has made me weep plentifully, at the simple and unaffected account he has given of this death: it is above all praise. The letter he wrote to the King is the finest thing in the world [1]; His Majesty was interrupted three or four times by his tears, in reading it: it was a farewell, and an assurance of perfect fidelity, asking pardon nobly for his past errors, into which he had been forced by the misfortunes of the times, and thanking him for the recall of the Prince de Conti, in whose favour he said a great many things. He afterwards recommended to his family to be united, embraced them all, and made them all embrace one another in his presence, and promise to love each other as brothers. He gave a reward to all his people for their past services, begging their forgiveness for the ill example he had set them; and displayed a Christian devotion in receiving the sacraments, which is a source of eternal comfort and admiration. I beg my compliments to M. de Vardes on this event. My dear Sir, adieu.

LETTER 754

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, January 5, 1687.

Good day, and good year to you, my dear cousin. Good day, and good year to you, my dear niece. May this year be happier than those that have preceded it; may peace, quiet, and health, supply the place of good fortune to you, which you do not possess, though you merit it: in short, may the web of your future days be woven with silk; but particularly, may you be exempt from enchantments; for the charm, I can tell you, was double: it fell upon me as well as upon you, and M. de Corbinelli, and I often feel its power, by the constant remembrance we

[1] This letter has been printed in the *Histoire du Grand Condé,* by Désormeaux, Vol. IV, page 493.

have of you both, and by the impossibility of forgetting you. We sometimes made efforts towards breaking it, like those who wish to swim or run in their sleep; but our efforts were as fruitless as theirs. It was not our eating salmon, which gave rise to our wish of seeing you; but whenever we were inclined to be witty, or the air of Livry, the chocolate, or the tea, had roused our vivacity, we were in despair that you were not with us, and we scrupled to laugh without you. Who could have believed that we should not have told you so the next day? But no, the spell was too powerful; we were obliged to wait for a new year: it now undraws the curtain, restores us to our liberty, and makes me, at the very commencement of it, begin a correspondence, in which we shall be considerable gainers. I am always delighted to see you in good spirits: seek to amuse yourself, and for this purpose employ all the means you took from here. Your verses are pleasant and easy, and remind us of you very agreeably. Your letter to the little woman at Paris has entertained us highly. She defends herself very prettily. I can scarcely believe that you have had no hand in the verses she sends you on the subject of her vapours, and of the reason which, perhaps, made M. de Montjeu deficient in the rites of hospitality: nothing can be better. It seems as if I ought to thank you for the pains you take to beautify Chaseu. This charming situation well deserves the trouble you bestow on it. I can easily conceive how much you are attached to the neighbourhood. You have good society there. I met M. d'Autun the other day, who told me wonders of you all. I believe Toulongeon is very glad to be so rich, as to be able to repair Alonne. M. d'Autun told me yesterday, that my aunt had paid all her son's debts before she died. I am surprised and rejoiced at this, for I dreaded the effect of avarice; and I was sorry that this vile monster should be found in our blood. Thank God, my dear cousin, you and I are wholly exempted from it: so is our Provençale. What she inherits from the Rabutins, joined to the Sévignés and the Grignans, places her

even beyond the reach of suspicion. She is still in Paris, surrounded with business.

You have heard, my dear cousin, the particulars of the Prince's death. I think his eulogy is pronounced in very few words, by saying that he joined to the beauty of an heroic life, a truly Christian death; that he equally discharged the duties of a pious Christian, a faithful subject, a kind father, and a good master; that in twenty-four hours he settled all his affairs, with a firmness, tranquillity, mildness, and clearness of intellect, which made him appear as in the day of battle; for it is said, that, on all these occasions, he was perfect; and that death, which is the most important action of our life, has been also the noblest part of his. This reminds me of the verses you formerly wrote under his portrait:

De sa gloire la terre est pleine;
Comme le foudre on craint son bras;
Il a gagné mille combats,
Et l'on doute encor s'il n'est pas
Plus soldat qu'il n'est capitaine [1].

M. d'Autun is still very much afflicted at this event: he will tell you many particulars respecting it, when you see him. The King has regretted his loss, and has reinstated the Prince de Conti in favour, in compliance with the dying request of the Prince. The Duc, now the Prince, has retained all his household, and increased all their salaries. He appears afflicted in the highest degree. In short, everyone has done his duty. But what compensates for this misfortune, and converts the general sentiment of grief into joy, is the perfect health of the King, for which we cannot be sufficiently thankful, and which proves, by the public cheerfulness, that the expression of sorrow for his illness [2] was unfeigned. If you will send us the letter you have written to the King, you will oblige us.

[1] The earth is full of his glory; his arm is feared like thunder; he has gained a thousand victories; and it is doubted whether he is the greatest soldier, or the greatest General. [Translation.]

[2] At the end of the preceding year, Louis XIV. had undergone an

*LETTER 755

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

Paris, Twelfth-Day, 1687.

I omit all I might say in answer to your pious and moral reflections, thinking I should write a repetition, instead of a reply. I should return you your own words, and my letter would only be an echo of yours; because I am fortunate enough to think as you do on this occasion. I had rather, therefore, scold you, and tell you that you are very delicate and very affected, to suppose yourself seized with an attack of infirmity, because a grandfather, before your daughter has taken the liberty of presenting you with another proof of it. What a misfortune! And to whom too do you make the complaint? to whom do you address yourself? and what would you do, if you had one of the age of sixteen [1], who had taken the habit at the Visitation of Aix? Really, you would lead a fine life; and I bear the affront as if it were nothing. I contemplate this evil, which has not yet proved itself so, with heroic courage: I prepare myself for its consequences, with peace and tranquillity; and seeing there is no way of escape, and that I am not the strongest, I think of the obligation I owe to God, for conducting me so gently to the grave. I thank him for the desire he daily gives me to prepare for death, and the wish of not draining my life to the dregs. Extreme old age is frightful and humiliating: the good Corbinelli and I see a painful instance of this truth hourly,

operation for fistula. It is well known that the first surgeon, Felix, had practised this operation upon many persons who were afflicted in the same way for several months before. He invented new instruments, and was successful. The King displayed true courage in this dangerous and painful trial.

[1] Madame de Sévigné had at this time a grand-daughter of this age—Marie Blanche Adhémar de Grignan.

in the poor Abbé de Coulanges, whose helplessness and infirmities make us wish never to reach this period. See how we philosophise, as it becomes Christians! and this is what we entreat you to do, when your grand-daughter shall be sixteen years old. But there is plenty of time yet, and you know more of this than we do; still I could not help taking advantage eagerly of this subject of old age to write you a sermon, knowing that if I lost the opportunity, I should never recover it. Your Prince de Conti profits wisely by the kindness and favour of the King, which the Prince obtained for him. I am sometimes grieved, that you do not reign in the house of this rising sun. M. de La Trousse is happy in being beloved by *tutti quanti* (all, as many as they may be), but particularly by such a *reprobate* as you: present my regards to him, and to M. de Vardes, whom I truly respect and love. I beg my compliments to your lady. I am delighted to please her, and that my very natural admiration of the purity of her language has not embroiled me with her. I also thank your daughter, and congratulate her on having raised you to a dignity which I have so long possessed: as for yourself, Sir, be assured that if I were not restrained by a jealous man at my elbow, I should say enough to enrage him. M. de Grignan is just arrived: all this household is at your service, and so is our poor dear Abbé.

M. DE CORBINELLI *also writes to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *Letter.*)

Taken in one point of view, Sir, I cannot help thinking the title of grandfather a very noble one: a tribe of children come into the world, who honour us more, and often love us better, than our own children. On the other side, grandfathers are in continual fear of a greater number of inconveniences, or untoward circumstances, that may befall these, either in their conduct, or their fortune. But the surest way is, to be pleased with the decrees of heaven, and to submit to them: it is the only means of soft-

ening them. I am sorry, not to be at the conversations of the Récollets, nor at the conferences of M. de Greffeille, with you and the wits. You would have made me perfect in matters of law. I should also have taken great pleasure in teaching your missionaries the art of reclaiming the Protestants, and of repairing the injuries the monastic tribe have done us. But, alas! God has not thought fit that it should be so. The death of the Prince has edified the whole world, and you as well as the rest of us. I could have wished he had given the public some sign of life, with regard to his Princesse. Adieu, my friend; I embrace you and your dear family with my whole heart, wife, daughter, and grandchildren, but you more particularly than all, without rancour, though you are my rival.

*LETTER 756

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

January 27, 1687.

If this letter gives you any pleasure, as you sometimes flatter me that my letters are not disagreeable to you, you have to thank the Chevalier de Grignan for it. It is he who desires me to write to you, to ask you some questions respecting the waters of Balaruc. Are they not in your neighbourhood? for what disorders are they taken? are they taken for the gout? have they ever benefited those who have taken them? at what time are they taken? are they drank, used as a bath, or is the part affected simply immersed in them? In short, Sir, if you can patiently bear this long string of interrogatories, and will have the goodness to answer them, you will perform a great act of charity to a man, who esteems you most, and is most afflicted with the gout. I might finish my letter here, but I wish to ask you how you find yourself, on being a grandfather. I conclude you have received the scolding I gave

you on the dislike you expressed to me at this dignity: I brought myself forward as an example to you, and said, "Do not grieve, but prepare for it." In short, the prospect is worse than the reality: Providence conducts us with so much kindness through the different periods of our life, that we scarcely feel the change; our days glide gently and imperceptibly along, like the motion of the hour-hand, which we cannot discover. If, at the age of twenty, we were to be treated as the superiors of our family, and were showed in a glass the countenance we now exhibit, or at least shall exhibit at the age of sixty, at the same time comparing it with that of twenty, we should shrink back, and be terrified at the spectacle: but we advance gradually; we are the same to-day as yesterday, and to-morrow as to-day: thus we go on, without perceiving it, which is a miracle of the Providence I adore. My pen has led me to this length, without my thinking of it. You were, no doubt, one of the good company at Cardinal de Bonzi's.

Adieu, Sir; I am unchangeable with regard to the esteem and friendship I have promised you.

*LETTER 757

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, February 14, 1687.

Let us enjoy the pleasure of being no longer under the spell of enchantments. You must not praise me for having thought the first of this; for it is certain I felt their effects. But, my dear cousin, what do you expect from me to-day? I can tell you of nothing but death, for my imagination is so full of it, as to exclude everything else.

The first I have to mention is the death of Maréchal de Créqui, after an illness of four days: how short has been his career, and how wroth has he been with the grim monster, who, unmindful of his projects and affairs, came thus unseasonably to interrupt his plans! Never was death so

unwelcome; but he was obliged to submit to its laws. He received the sacraments. Nine days after, the Duc de Créqui, his elder brother, followed him. This was yesterday morning, after a long illness; and he was scarcely cold, when the Duc de Gêvres received his office of Governor of Paris. He was in luck; he was the first who told the news to the King, and the first to obtain this noble gift. I have just read the almanac of Milan with my own eyes: "The same day, the thirteenth of this month, in such a sign, a great government shall again be filled; one brother will not lament the other." You will agree with me, that this is a singular coincidence. How low is the house of Créqui fallen, and what great dignities, within the space of a few days, have gone out of the family! The Duc d'Estrées is dead in Rome; and the day the news was received in Paris, the Duchesse d'Estrées, his mother-in-law, your cousin, died of apoplexy. You see, my poor children, that nothing can be more melancholy than this letter: if I were often to write you such, it would be much better to be again under the force of enchantment. Your noble and excellent dispositions, and the gaiety so necessary and salutary to you, would sink under them. Let us talk of different times. I have found, by chance, *Moreri*, under my hand: I sought for our Rabutins; they are very good and very ancient. Mayeul lived as a great Lord, in 1147, more than five hundred years ago. This is a noble stock.

*LETTER 758

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, March 10, 1687.

Again, my dear cousin, have I to enter upon the melancholy subjects of death and lamentation. But how can I be silent on the most beautiful, the most magnificent, and the most splendid funeral pomp, which has been wit-

nessed in the days of mortal man? that of the late Prince, and all he has ever been! His fathers are represented by medals, down to Saint-Louis; all his victories by bas-relief, under canopies of open tents, supported by skeletons, whose attitudes are admirable. The mausoleum, which rises almost to the roof, is covered with a still higher canopy in the form of a pavilion, the four corners of which fall again like tents. The whole square of the choir is ornamented with these bas-reliefs, and devices underneath them, emblematic of the different actions of his life. That of his league with the Spaniards is expressed by a dark night, with three Latin words, signifying, that what is done in the absence of the sun should be concealed [1]. The whole is scattered over with fleurs-de-lys of a sombre colour, and a small lamp reflects ten thousand little stars. I forget half; but you will have the book, which will tell you all. If I did not suppose you have already received a copy, I would have accompanied this letter by one; but a duplicate would have afforded you no pleasure.

Everybody has been to see this superb decoration. It has cost the present Prince a hundred thousand francs, but it is an expense which does him great honour. M. de Meaux pronounced the Funeral Oration: we shall see it in print. This, my dear cousin, is a rough sketch of the subject of the piece. We are still melancholy; but to cheer you a little, I shall pass to another extreme, that is, from death to marriage, and from excessive pomp and ceremony, to extreme homeliness and familiarity, both being as original as it is possible to be. It is the marriage of the son of the Duc de Gramont, of the age of fifteen, with the daughter of M. de Noailles, which is to take place this evening at Versailles. It is to be managed thus. No one is to be invited, no one to be apprised of it: the bride and bridegroom will each sup at home. At midnight they will meet at the church, without the father and mother being

[1] This reminds us of the ingenious idea of Michael Corneille, which has been seen in the gallery of Chantilly, where the Muse of History is represented as tearing from the life of the Prince, the pages which contain the account of his victories against his country.

present, unless they are at that time at Versailles. The ceremony will take place; there will be no grand display of dresses, no putting the bride to bed; this will be left to the governor and governess to manage. The next morning they will not be tormented with witticisms and indecent jests. They will rise: the young man will attend mass and the King's dinner, and the young lady will dress herself as usual, and pay visits with her good mamma; she will not keep her bed in state, like a country bride, exposed to crowds of impertinent visitors; and this wedding (an event which is generally notorious enough) will be jumbled in the most natural and prettiest manner possible, with all the other events of life, and will glide so insensibly into the usual train of things, that no one will suppose a festival has taken place in the two families. This is what I was determined to finish my letter with; and I contend, my dear cousin, that this picture is as extraordinary, in its kind, as the other.

I have just seen a prelate who was present at the Funeral Oration. He tells us, that M. de Meaux surpassed himself, and that so fine a subject was never so well appreciated, and so ably handled. I have seen M. d'Autun here two or three times. He appears to me to be one of your best friends. I think him very agreeable; he has so much affability, that I do not wonder at the attachment of those with whom he associates. He has had friends of such high rank, by whom he has been so long and tenderly beloved, that this would be a sufficient claim upon our esteem, if he had no other title to it. My daughter sends you a great many remembrances. She is engaged in a law-suit, which makes her not unlike the Comtesse de *Pimbêche* [1]. I congratulate you on having to cultivate the body and mind of the little de Langheac. This is a fine name for administering medicaments, as Molière says; and is an amusement in which we are daily engaged with the little de Grignan.

[1] See Racine's *Plaideurs,* Scene VII., Act i.

*LETTER 759

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

Paris, April 3, 1687.

My beautiful and robust health was attacked ten days ago, Sir, by a slight colic, composed of bile, and other human miseries, which, slight as it was, made me feel that I am mortal: this has occupied me so seriously as to cause a distraction of mind that prevented my writing to you. I mention this, to give you an idea of my indisposition: for the desire of answering you was so strong in my mind, that it could not have been overcome, but by something considerable. Happily, M. de Vardes restored our *friend* to me at this time; but his philosophy, which had been previously prepared for the sufferings of M. de Vardes, did not make the smallest effort towards persuading me that mine was not worthy of my attention; and, in short, I found myself, in a few days, in a state to preach to others, and quietly resume my Lent, which had only been interrupted by a few broths. I did not doubt, Sir, that your presence and conversation would be of greater service to M. de La Trousse than all I could write. With regard to Father Bourdaloue, it would be a bad sign for Montpellier, if he were not liked there, after having been so truly and sincerely admired at Court and at Paris. I can conceive that the subject of the new brothers, interwoven with the usual beauty of his sermons, must produce a very fine effect. It is by such passages of zeal and eloquence that he delights and transports us: he has often suspended my breath by the extreme attention with which I have hung upon the energy of his discourse, and I could not recover it, till he was pleased to make an end of one subject, only to begin another of equal beauty. I am certain you know what I mean, and that you are as much

charmed with the wit, good sense, cheerfulness, and affability of Father Bourdaloue in private life, as enchanted with his sermons in public. I suppose you will find means to keep out of the confusion of the grand festival, which may cause so much sacrilege. The Abbé de Quincy, nominated to the Bishopric of Poitiers, did not think his lungs sufficiently strong to discharge his duties satisfactorily to himself, and has resigned it again to the King. This action is noble and rare, and has been very deservedly praised. His Majesty has appointed in his stead M. de Tréquier, of our Lower Brittany, deputed here by the Province, a very pious prelate, formerly Father of the Oratory, who, with a very ample chest, has dedicated himself canonically to all the fatigues of a pastoral life.

M. de Harlay and M. de Besons have filled the two vacant places at the Council, and M. de La Reynie and M. de Bigon are become ordinaries. Those who are mortified, will be consoled when they least expect it by the death of some old dean. You know there is a carousal, at which thirty lords and ladies will have the pleasure of amusing the Court at their expense. Poor Polignac, who was on the point of marrying Mademoiselle de Rambures, has found, on the proposal of being a menin, that His Majesty has not yet forgiven his mother, and the match has been very disagreeably broken off. Mademoiselle de Rambures appeared grieved at it; it is to be hoped he will be more fortunate in his third attempt. M. Dangeau fondly anticipated the pleasure of espousing the most beautiful, the most lovely, the most youthful, the most refined, and the most fairy-like nymph at Court. O too happy in the possession of such a wife! We must believe Molière. But what delighted him most was the name of *Bavaria*; to be the *cousin of the Dauphiness*; to wear *mourning for all Europe, as a relation*; in short, nothing was wanting to perfect the beauty of the circumstance. As it is impossible, however, to be completely happy in this world, God permitted the Dauphiness, on seeing the young lady sign herself everywhere, *Sophia of Bavaria,* to be so trans-

ported with rage, that the King was obliged to go three times to pacify her, being alarmed for her pregnancy. At length everything was erased, blotted out, obliterated, M. de Strasbourg having asked pardon, and acknowledged, that his niece springs from a branch that has long been broken off, separated, and debased by inferior alliances, and which has never borne any other name than that of *Levestein.*

This is the price at which this brilliant and ridiculous scene has terminated, and by promising that she should not be *a Bavaria*, or at least, a cousin: but you will allow, that, to a man elated with such a prospect, *the first step backwards* cannot be very agreeable. You may guess how the charitable courtiers are affected at this adventure; and, for my own part, I confess, that all the evils which spring from vanity afford me a malicious pleasure. Do not name me in this affair. Be assured, Sir, that I am one of the persons in the world who esteem you most and know you best (which is the same thing). Tell me a little news of yourself occasionally, and confer a further obligation on your humble servant, by assuring Father Bourdaloue of my sincere respect, and M. de La Trousse of my faithful friendship. I wished our Corbinelli to add a line, but he is slipped through my fingers, and I cannot find him again.

*LETTER 760

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, April 5, 1687.

My niece de Montataire came to see me to-day; in speaking of you she strangely alarmed me, by the state in which she described my poor niece de Coligny. There is but one degree beyond what she has suffered, and this degree is so dreadful, that I dare not even think of it, either on her account, or on yours, my dear cousin, whose

life would be pitiable indeed without her charming society. Tell me then speedily how she is, and how you are. I am now not surprised that I did not hear from you: alas! my poor children, you were otherwise employed. Your amiable Bishop (*M. de Roquette*) is with you at present. I pity you, if you are not in a situation to enjoy his stay at Autun. He desired me to write to him; but I promise you I shall do no such thing: I am discouraged and overwhelmed by the superiority of his mind. I saw, by chance, at the moment of his departure, two divine pieces of his composition, and in proportion as I read, and was delighted with them, I formed a resolution never to write to such a man. Let him return then, if he wishes to know what I think. The suavity and ease of his wit agrees with my weakness; its dazzling brilliancy is concealed by his modesty and goodness. This is the state of my feelings with respect to your worthy prelate, while I am in real pain for what you and my niece have suffered.

The King goes on the twentieth to Maintenon, and a few days afterwards to Luxembourg, to view his noble conquest. His journey will take him eleven days, he will stay there three, and will be eleven in returning. This will take him a month. The Dauphin, the Duchesse, the Princesse de Conti, and several other ladies, will accompany him. The Dauphiness will not leave Versailles. The King will be attended by few troops, and only half his guard.

*LETTER 761

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, April 25, 1687.

I begin my letter to-day, but I shall not finish it till I have heard the Prince's Funeral Oration to-morrow by Father Bourdaloue. I have seen M. d'Autun, who has received your letter, and the fragment of that I wrote to you. I know not whether it was worth sending to him

here: what may be very passable at Autun, may not experience the same favour in Paris. All my hope is, that you corrected it in passing through your hands, for what I write stands very much in need of correction. Be this as it may, my dear cousin, it was read at the Guise Mansion: I arrived there at the same time; they would have praised me, but I modestly refused to hear them, and I scolded both you and M. d'Autun. So much for the fragment. Your reflections are melancholy and just, upon the overthrow of the house of Créqui. Canaples is the only one that remains of the three brothers, after all the tribulations and misfortunes which you have so well detailed. But a little Blanchefort is saved from the wreck, who is returned with glory from Hungary, handsome, well made, prudent, virtuous, polite, and afflicted, without being cast down, at the misfortunes of his family: he finds all roads prepared to receive him with pleasure in the world [1]. He will perhaps make as great a fortune as his fathers, seeing himself as high as the rest. Nothing, in my opinion, is so well calculated to form an honest man, as to begin the world anew.

I am convinced with you that the fate of the poor Duchesse d'Estrées would have been very different, if it had been united with yours. Rank was a misfortune to her, and delivered her up to apoplexy, beginning the attack by the deprivation of her charming understanding, which is, in my opinion, a worse evil than death.

I am transported with the Prince's Funeral Oration by Father Bourdaloue. He surpassed himself, which is saying a great deal. His text was: "*And the King lamented over Abner,—and the King said unto his servants: Know ye not that there is a Prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?*"

His heart is buried at the Jesuits. He spoke of it

[1] This young Blanchefort died on the 16th of March, 1696. Letter 1074, of 29th March, 1696, of Madame de Sévigné's upon this event, (probably the last letter she ever wrote), which has never before appeared, will be found in its proper chronological order almost at the end of the seventh volume.

with a grace and eloquence that sweeps, or carries, all before it, whichever you please. He proved that this heart was firm, upright, and Christian. *Firm*: because at the highest period of his glorious life he was superior to praise; and he enumerated his victories, and pointed out to us as a miracle, that a hero, in such a situation, should be wholly exempt, as he was, from vanity and self-love. This was treated divinely. *Upright*: and here he entered, without scruple, into his errors, and his war against the King. This part of his character, which we think of with trembling, which we would willingly avoid, draw a veil over, or wipe out with a sponge, he discussed freely, and showed, by five or six reflections, particularly the refusal of the sovereignty of Cambrai, and the offer he made to renounce his own interest, rather than obstruct the peace; that in the midst of his irregularities his heart was well disposed, that he was turned away by the force of his destiny, by reasons which had dragged him, as it were, into a war, and occasioned a separation which he inwardly detested, and which he had repaired to the utmost of his power on his return, by his services, as at Tollus. Senef, etc., by his proofs of affection for the King, and his constant desire to please him. It is impossible to describe with what judgment all this was managed, and what lustre he gave to his hero, by the inward grief he depicted so ably, and with so much appearance of probability. *Christian*: for he had said, in his last moments, that notwithstanding the splendour of his life, he had never felt the true faith extinguished in his heart, but had carefully preserved its principles. The orator, believing this to be true, because the Prince had affirmed, refers to God even his moral virtues, and heroic perfections, which by the holiness of his death he had consummated. He spoke of his return to God for the last two years, which he proved to be noble, great, and sincere; and he painted his death in colours which will be indelible in my memory, and that of the whole audience, who appeared riveted to all he said, by an attention which scarcely suffered them to breathe.

To tell you with what strokes of eloquence his discourse was embellished, would be impossible, and I even spoil it by the roughness of my sketch. It is as if a sign-painter were to retouch a picture of Raphael's. In short, my dear children, this will only serve to excite your curiosity to see this piece in print. The discourse of M. de Meaux is already published. It is beautiful and masterly. The parallel between the Prince and M. de Turenne is a little in extremes [1]; but he excuses himself by denying that it is a parallel: he says, it is a grand spectacle of two great men given by God to the King; and he thence takes a very fair opportunity of praising His Majesty, who can so well dispense with these great Generals, his genius is so vast, and his destiny so glorious: I have spoiled this too: but it is a very beautiful period. Adieu, my dear cousin; I am tired, and so are you. I embrace thee, my dear niece, and thy little de Langheac.

*LETTER 762

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

Paris, Monday, April 29, 1687.

So you like my letters, Sir; I am delighted that you do; this is one which will be worth a hundred. My robust health was slightly attacked about a month ago, by a little colic, a little rheumatism, a little vexation: consequently all this might excuse me from writing to you; but I had rather die than another should tell you, that the Prince de Conti is at length returned to Court; he is this night at

[1] It appears that the Court had taken it amiss, that Bossuet should have placed a gentleman, even a *Bouillon*, by the side, and on a level, with a Prince of the blood. This is what is called a parallel in extremes. It had also been revised for publication, if we may believe another letter to Bussy: this appears to us a little strange in the present day, but such was the spirit of the times, such the refined servitude of the courtiers of Louis XIV.

Versailles, and the King, like a kind father, has restored him to favour, after having exiled him for a while, to leave him at leisure to make his own reflections. No doubt he has done so, and the Court will be very gay and splendid on the occasion. His Majesty will make several Chevaliers at Whitsuntide, but it will be only a family promotion: M. de Chartres, the Duc de Bourbon, the Prince de Conti, and M. du Maine, but no one else: all the other candidates must be pleased to have patience; but they will not see without mortification the adjournment of their hopes. The Duc de Vieuville is governor to the Duc de Chartres. Madame de Polignac, who is not Mademoiselle d'Alerac, paid a visit yesterday to Madame de Grignan. She was brilliant, lively, elated with the grandeur of the house of Polignac, fond of talking of the name, and all the personages belonging to it. She has taken upon herself the fortune of the two brothers, and has supported generously, and courageously, the frown and disapprobation of the King. She has employed skillful artificers; and instead of deserting the deserted, like women in general, she has made it a point of honour to reinstate them at Court. I could answer for it that she will revive and re-establish this family: this is what Providence had in store for them, and which prevented us from being able to read distinctly, what it had written for Mademoiselle d'Alerac. Adieu, Sir, love me, for indeed you ought. I love your mind, your worth, your wisdom, your folly, your virtue, your humour, your goodness, in short, all that belongs to you; and wish you, and the pretty covey under your wing, which must afford you so much pleasure and comfort, every possible happiness. All here salute you, except our *friend*, who knows nothing of this hasty letter. I shall talk of you a great deal with Bourdaloue. Madame Dangeau, formerly *Bavaria*, is very prudent, very amiable, and makes her husband very happy; she might have made him very ridiculous.

*LETTER 763

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, the last day of May, 1687.

I must never have been in the country, to be ignorant of the meaning of the word *glean*[1]. It is a slight consolation which Providence gives to the poor; and of which we are an example, when we go to collect our scattered means. I know not how you find it as to your estates, but I find, my dear cousin, that the only way to live by ours is to reside on them, for when we reside elsewhere, it is almost impossible to obtain the transport of our revenues.

We expect the King in six days. He has seen the wonderful fortifications at Luxembourg, and his new subjects have seen him in perfect health. M. de Lavardin is not yet ready to set out. The Pope has revived an ancient *bull*, by which he deprives sovereign princes of all immunities and franchises, and directs law-suits to be commenced against all criminals found in the palace of the Queen of Sweden. You see plainly that this squib must have time to spend itself before the departure of the Ambassador. I embrace my dear niece, and can easily comprehend the pleasure it will be to her to remove, provided it be only for a short time; she will find your conversation the more agreeable afterwards. We are sometimes too much accustomed to the best things, and feel their value more by losing them for a while; let it however be a little while only, in this case, for it would be too cruel not to be with you when she has the opportunity. Ask our friend Corbinelli if I am not right. I must add, that what you sent me in your last letter pleased me highly. Good heavens, my dear cousin, how much wit you possess! What a pity it is, that you have not been happy! for prosperity, which

[1] Bussy makes use of this term in speaking of a circuit he had taken to his different tenants to collect his rents.

always makes us brilliant, would have given us the pleasure of seeing to what eminence it would have raised you. But then again, you would not have had time to amuse yourself in the way you do. You would have performed achievements, which would have dignified your family, but you would not have had leisure to divert your friends. In this respect, therefore, we may say that misfortune is good for something. I cannot but admire you.

My daughter sends you her remembrances. I believe I have already told you, that from the beautiful *Madelonne* she has become the Comtesse de *Pimbêche*. This is the constant effect of law-suits.

*LETTER 764

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, June 4, 1687.

On my return, Madame, from Forléans, Bussy, and Dijon, I found a letter from you here, which gave me real pleasure. I gain more in proportion from my estates than you do from Bourbilly, because I am upon the spot, and you are at a distance. As you say, Madame, we live upon our revenues when we consume them ourselves; but, sent away, they amount almost to nothing. With regard to your assertion, that when we are engaged at Court, it is almost impossible to transport our revenues thither, I perfectly agree with you. But shall I give you a remedy for this evil? Get yourself exiled, Madame; it is not so difficult a thing as you may imagine, and you will make use of your provisions at Bourbilly. What you have done for your children, Madame, is very discreet, humane, and even Christian-like. In establishing them you have stripped yourself of the good things of the world, and you will therefore quit it with less sorrow when the time shall arrive.

As the Pope is a man of great probity, he is firm in

his resolutions; and when he is convinced he is in the right, nothing could induce him to change them. It is grievous, indeed, that these pious obstinacies should be found in his way: but his life is so holy, that Christian Kings would disgrace themselves if they quarrelled with him. We must at the same time confess the truth, that exemptions are odious when they suffer crimes to remain unpunished. It is an honour to a great Pope to reform this abuse, and even to a great King not to complain of it too loudly [1].

I believe with you, Madame, that your niece has liked me the better for her absence. I used to say of love, many years ago, and it is the same with friendship:

La longue absence en amour ne vaut rien,
Mais si tu veux que ton feu s'eternise,
Il faut se voir et quitter par reprise:
Un peu d'absence fait grand bien [2].

*LETTER 765

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, June 17, 1687.

I shall not waste my time, my dear cousin, in replying to your answers, though it be the way to keep up the conversation. I wish to begin by informing you with sorrow of the death of your good and faithful friend the Duc de Saint-Aignan. A fever of seven or eight days has taken

[1] Louis XIV. was far from thinking with Bussy. Lavardin set out, and, as it is well known, entered Rome with an escort, or train, of a thousand armed men, with whom he put himself in possession of the quarter and ancient privileges of the Ambassadors. He was excommunicated, but the Pope was forced to yield. The violence and haughtiness with which this affair was treated, did not a little contribute (according to the remark of Henault) to strengthen the league of Augsbourg, which was formed in the preceding year, and concluded at the beginning of this, during the carnival of Venice.

[2] In love, long absence is a dangerous thing.
But if thy flame thou wouldst eternalise,
Oft quit thy object, often meet again:
From trifling absence, good effects arise.
[Translation.]

him off, and we may say he has died young, though I am told he was in reality eighty-four years of age. He neither felt in mind nor body the sad inconveniences of old age. He always served the King on his knees with an activity persons of eighty-four never possess. He has been the father of children within these two years. In short, he has been a perfect prodigy. God will reward him for what he has done for his honour and the glory of the world. I have been affected at this event, upon your account. He has loved you faithfully. You were his brother in arms, and chivalry was your bond of union. He has rendered you services which no other courtier would have dared nor have been inclined to do. He has professed a friendship that has long been without example. He had an air and manner that were an ornament to the Court. If the fashion should be established to draw parallels in Funeral Orations [1], I could never endure a parallel in his, for he was certainly singular in his kind, a great original without a copy.

We have read with grief what you have written to the King. In wishing to affect him, you have penetrated us. It was not at me you aimed. Would to God your letter might have the same effect upon his heart that it has produced on ours. What you represent to him is worthy of this. There are parts so pathetic, and turns, to induce him to assist you, so extraordinary, so urgent, and so true, that they overwhelm us. This letter has been received; and it will not be your fault, nor that of your poor friend, if it does not procure you some favour. It is true that your misfortunes, though very great, are inferior to your courage.

Adieu, my dear cousin. I conclude by embracing you and our dear Coligny. If we are fortunate enough to see you here, we shall be truly rejoiced, and will make you agree that if sometimes "from trifling absence good effects arise," very ill effects may arise from too long a one.

[1] This is an indirect stroke at Bossuet. See Letter 761, of April 25th, 1687, and the note, in this volume.

The beautiful Comtesse is satisfied and delighted that you love her under every name. She entreats you, father and daughter, to continue your regard; she deserves this by the manner in which she feels towards you.

*LETTER 766

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, June 20, 1687.

You are right, Madame, to interrupt our conversations to talk to me of my dear friend. For my part, I talk of him to every one; but I wish to say more of him to you than to others. It is upwards of forty years since we were brothers, as you say, in arms; and this friendship lasted fifteen or sixteen years without any intercourse between us. It is thirty years since we met again at Court, he as first Gentleman of the King's bed-chamber, and I as Colonel General of the cavalry. It was at that period that my friend, finding me persecuted by ill offices that were done me with the King, first declared to His Majesty that he was my old friend, and that he would answer, not only for my fidelity to his service, but for my respect to his person. During the thirteen months that I was in prison, a week did not pass without his saying something to the King in my favour, and often with a boldness which his friendship for me could alone excuse. Such, Madame, was the friend I have lost: judge whether there is a man more worthy of pity than I, or more worthy of esteem than he. For in addition to his merit with respect to myself, he possessed an excellent understanding, extraordinary courage, and a heart which would not have disgraced the greatest monarch that ever sat upon a throne.

*LETTER 767

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, July 28, 1687.

It is impossible to compose a more beautiful or just eulogium, my dear cousin, than you have pronounced over your brave and generous friend, the late Duc de St.-Aignan. You display at the same time a heart overflowing with affection and gratitude which deserves in return an eulogium from us. I felt this loss immediately on your account, and, however painfully it may affect you now, you will feel it still more when you come to this country, and no longer find this excellent mediator between the King and you. I shall carefully preserve the letter which contains the praises, *without a parallel*, of your generous friend. It shows the perfection of both your hearts, and serves me as a bond, by which I claim a part of the friendship you bestowed on him. This succession is on one side very melancholy, and on the other very gratifying. The *Gazette* will have informed you of the promotion of M. de Boufflers and others. I could very well have dispensed with giving you this information: it is an additional misfortune, to see so many others happy. Is not this true, my dear niece? The Italians say wisely: *Non ti invidio, No, ma piango il mio*[1]. For my part, I do not know whether I stop there; for it seems to me as if I not only pitied myself, but envied others. The severe morality of our friend Corbinelli will scold me: I fly.

[1] I do not envy thy fate, but I lament my own. [Translation.]

*LETTER 768

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Cressia, August 4, 1687.

I did not doubt, Madame, that you had answered my last letter from Chaseu; and I have just received the answer: I wrote to you, however, from hence, two days ago. I am glad you are satisfied with my heart, on the subject of my poor friend, and I confirm to you the donation of the place he occupied in it. It is indeed true, that I shall never find a St.-Aignan between the King and me. I have not seen the *Gazette,* and do not therefore know what has been done for M. de Boufflers and the rest. At the beginning of my disgrace I keenly felt these promotions. I was not then quite dead, but time and resignation have given me the *coup de grâce*; and the Maréchals of France that are now made, give me as little concern as those that were made by Henry IV., or that will be made by the Duc of Burgundy.

*LETTER 769

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, September 2, 1687.

I have just received your letters from Cressia, my dear cousin, which have afforded me some consolation, for I am overwhelmed with sorrow, having seen my dear uncle expire within these ten days: you know what he was to his dear niece. There is no favour he has not conferred on me, whether in leaving me his entire property, or preserving and retrieving that of my children. He extricated me from the abyss into which I was plunged by the death of M. de Sévigné: gained my law-suits, improved my estates,

paid my debts, made my son's estate the prettiest and most agreeable place possible, settled my children: in short, it is to his unceasing cares that I owe the peace and comfort of my life. You will easily conceive that such high obligations and so long an acquaintance, must create a severe pang when we have to separate for ever. The loss of old people does not prevent it from being painful, when we have so much reason to love them, and have seen them constantly before us. My dear uncle was ninety years of age: he was weighed down with infirmity: life was a burden to him. What then would we wish him? a longer period of suffering? This reflection has helped to calm my mind. His illness was that of a man of thirty; an uninterruptible fever, and an inflammation of the lungs. In seven days he terminated a long and honourable life with sentiments of piety, penitence, and love towards God, which makes us hope his mercy will be extended to him. This, my dear cousin, has occupied and afflicted me for a fortnight. I am penetrated with grief and gratitude.

Our hearts are not hard: I remember all that gratitude and friendship led you to think and write on the merit and good qualities of M. de St.-Aignan. We are very far from forgetting those to whom we are obliged. I thought your rondo very pretty: whatever you take in hand acquires an incomparable charm even when your heart has no share in it; for I conceive that gallantry may remain in your wit, without the charms of the amiable Toulongeon making any great impression upon you. I do not doubt the noble titles you have found in the archives of the house of Coligny. Many reflections might be made on the remains of those great personages, whose estates have passed into other hands.

LETTER 770

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Nevers, Saturday, September 20, 1687.
6 o'clock at night.

I received your letter this morning at La Charité; but you have been under a strange mistake in regard to our motions. We know nothing of Pont Agasson: we came to Milly. You must also make your apology to the weather, which you have accused so wrongfully; never, I say never, could anything have been more settled and serene. We have had but few or no fogs, except in a morning, and they were quickly dispersed; besides, the roads are fine beyond description, they are everywhere like a gravel walk; the mountains are levelled into plains, and the road to Hell is become the way to Paradise: but here I believe I am a little mistaken; for that way, we are told, is narrow and difficult, whereas this is wide, pleasant, and easy: in short, the Controllers have done miracles, and we have never ceased praising them as they deserve. If ever I go to Lyons, this is the road for me. However, here we are at Nevers; we purposed to have gone to Moulins to-morrow, but a Madame Ferret, an acquaintance of ours, has sent the person, at whose house we lodged, to Madame de Chaulnes, to shorten our journey by two days; for, instead of going to Moulins, and from thence to Bourbon, we shall go to-morrow straight to Bourbon, which is only ten leagues. This is a great saving; and pleases me so much, that, exclusive of the friendship I have for Madame de Chaulnes, who would never have taken this journey but upon my account, and the convenience of having our little vessel fastened to the great one, the certainty of losing no time, and of finding you at our return, make me for once prefer the waters of Bourbon to those of Vichy. I thank you a thousand times for your care and advice; but the

waters of Bourbon are to the full as salutary as those of Vichy, let people say what they will; besides, from hence to Vichy is upwards of sixty miles, and I shall be to-morrow night at Bourbon. In short, everything concurs to make me adopt this plan; and I am persuaded that if you were here, you would yourself say, "Go to Bourbon, Providence orders you." I go then with pleasure, and even with confidence. If I had consulted M. Fagon, he would have sent me there; so no more on the subject. Nothing can exceed the affectionate attentions of the Duchesse de Chaulnes towards me; she says nothing, but I can plainly perceive the satisfaction she feels in our being together.

I do not wonder that you are pleased with Savigny [1], it is certainly a most delightful situation. If there are any letters from you at Moulins, they will be forwarded to Bourbon. I am impatient to have news of the King's health, and M. de Grignan's, and his and your affairs; nothing can divert my thoughts from these subjects. I wish you had informed my son of the route the Duc de Chaulnes has taken, that he might have met him at Fougères. Pray inform M. and Madame de Coulanges how matters stand with me; I cannot doubt the interest they take in my welfare.

Adieu, my lovely; I am wholly occupied with your affection and solicitude for my health.

LETTER 771

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Bourbon, Monday, September 22, 1687.

We arrived here last night from Nevers, from whence I wrote to you. It is true, my child, that we came in a day, as we were told we should; but what a day! what ten

[1] A country-seat about twelve miles from Paris, that belonged to the Marquis de Vins.

leagues! we were travelling from day-break till night, without taking more than two hours rest at dinner time, through an incessant rain, and the most execrable roads that ever were seen; and we were frequently obliged to walk on foot, for fear of being overturned into frightful sloughs: all this too after five of the most delightful days in the world, lighted and warmed by the charming rays of the sun, and passing over roads like gravel walks; but here we are in quite another climate, a low country, covered with woods, like Brittany. We were received on our arrival by Madame Ferret, of Brittany, and are lodged in the same apartments Madame de Montespan, Madame d'Usèz, and Madame de Louvois have occupied. We slept well, and this morning we went to mass at the Capuchins, and received the compliments of Madame de Fourci, Madame de Nangis, and Mademoiselle d'Armentières. We have a physician to attend us, whom I much approve; it is Amiot, who is very well acquainted with, and expresses great esteem for, Alliot, and admires our good Jacob, with whom he was in close attendance for six months, at M. de Sully's, where that nobleman was confined with the disorder which put an end to his life. Madame de Verneuil had recommended this physician to me, but I had forgotten it; pray let Madame de Sully and M. de Coulanges know this: Amiot is an intimate friend of the latter; he had likewise the care of Madame de Louvois. He seems to dislike excessive bleeding, and approves the method of our Capuchins; he assures me, that all my little complaints arise from the spleen, and that the waters of Bourbon are sovereign in those cases. He is a great advocate for the waters of Vichy; but he says I shall find as much benefit from the use of these. His laxatives are the gentlest imaginable. He is of Alliot's opinion, that pumping is rather too violent a remedy, and more likely to injure the nerves than to do them good; and thinks moderate purgatives, with the warm bath, and the use of the waters internally, will be sufficient for me. He talks very sensibly; he will manage me with great care and circumspection, and will

give you a faithful account of his progress. As he is about to settle at Paris, you may suppose he would not willingly take with him the ill word of this country. Madame de Chaulnes' disorder is by no means to be neglected, these waters will do her service: we have very comfortable lodgings, and near each other; but as for the place itself, one may say of it,

Qu'*il* n'eut jamais du Ciel un regard amoureux [1].

But Providence seems to have conducted me hither by the hand. I always consult you in my own mind, and you are of opinion, I am sure, that I could not have taken a more proper step. Good heavens, how weary I am of thus perpetually talking of myself! But you will have it so. I shall, however, change the subject from me to you.

I have received your letter of Thursday the eighteenth, by which I find, my beloved child, that you are going to Versailles; I perceive also what stops M. de Grignan at this juncture. You may believe, I am not so ridiculously occupied with myself, as to neglect, even for an instant, thinking of you, and all that relates to you. This is an habitual thought; a fund that my heart is never without; and as there is much to think of, I think much—but often, alas! to little purpose. I want much to know how M. de Grignan does, and how you yourself are; I am frightened to death, lest you should be infected by any of the fevers that are so prevalent at Versailles, where, I am told, hardly a house is free. Heaven preserve my dearest child! I embrace the Marquis; give one remembrance from me to M. and Madame de Coulanges; if they want to learn anything respecting me, they well know of whom to inquire. I am not ignorant that Madame de Coulanges is going to settle at Brevannes; what pleasure it is to live in the country! I shall enjoy it in perfection when I get from hence.

It would surprise you to see the care Madame de Chaulnes takes of me; she sends you a thousand compli-

[1] That Heaven never enriched it with a smile. [Translation.]

ments, and talks of you continually; the expression of "the beautiful Comtesse" comes naturally to her; in short, you are always present to us. I thank you, my dearest, for your vegetable salt, and shall make use of it; you are very good to be thus mindful of your poor mamma! It is not often that mothers meet with such sweet attentions; on the other hand, I believe it is as rare to find a daughter so much beloved by a mother as you are by me; but, be this as it may, you make me infinitely happy, and I ought to suffer patiently the little sorrows that are attendant upon such an affection as mine.

LETTER 772

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Bourbon, Thursday, September 25, 1687.

I have received your letter of Monday the twenty-second, which gave me no small relief, my beloved child, by informing me of the excellent and prudent resolutions you have adopted in regard to the approaching winter. I can easily conceive that you will have business enough upon your hands, but you will have a good lawyer and an excellent host. I wish he may not supplant me; this winter will be the reverse of the last to you: it would be difficult indeed always to support the expense, but if you could, it would be a great pleasure: for my part, I cannot imagine how a person can bear to be a dead weight upon his friends; I am sure, were it in my power, I would be the first to set the contrary example. I acknowledge that His Majesty has been very gracious and condescending; but I had rather have heard something better. God must direct all; you have prevented me from making any complaint, by putting me in mind of whom I complain. The bark has performed its usual miracles with respect to the King's disorder. Madame de Rochefort has informed

Madame de Nangis of the Duc of Burgundy's illness, for which she appears extremely concerned.

You desire to know how things go with me. As well, my dear, as can be wished. I have now taken the waters two days; they sit very lightly and easily upon my stomach; they made me a little giddy indeed the first day, but it is gone off; if they continue to agree with me, I shall make no use of those of Vichy, which are sent here in four and twenty hours. Never was there so perfect a union between two rivals: they are heated in the hottest well here, and are drank mixed with the others. Thus the waters of Bourbon receive the waters of Vichy into their bosom, and impart to them the same degree of warmth: the latter are quite at home. Madame de Chaulnes and I are the most healthy patients in the place. Poor Madame de Nangis is really to be pitied; her attacks of colic are so violent, that they often throw her into convulsions. Mademoiselle d'Armentières is in so weak a way, that she seems at death's door. Madame de Fourci is just come from Vichy, to complete her cure, as she says, in this place; and how do you think she does it? By sleeping three hours every day after dinner, during which time her legs become as limp as a rag; when she wakes, she cannot stand upon them for another hour at least. In this manner she goes on day after day, and seems so perfectly satisfied, that her situation is, on that account, the more pitiable. The brother of your Berthelot is indeed in a deplorable way; he is sunk into a lethargy, the remains of a dreadful fit of apoplexy. It is one of the most disagreeable things of this place to have nothing but miserable objects before our eyes: the baths cure some, but have no effect on others. However, I have received so much benefit, that I have no reason to regret coming to a place where I am the happiest person in it. Madame de Chaulnes is nearly on a par with me; nothing can exceed her attentions to me; she really seems to be more anxious about my health than her own; she has sent for water from Vichy, merely because she was the occasion of my not going thither; so that I may either

take it or not, as I please: in my opinion, the waters here are much preferable, at least so all the physicians of this place say; but we shall see. It is certain, that those who have taken them are full as well as they were at Vichy; especially Madame Bel***: ask the Colberts about this woman; her adventures and misfortunes are truly pitiable. Be not uneasy about me, my dear Comtesse; Amiot is not a little proud of having the Duchesse and me for his patients, and hopes to gain credit by us this winter.

I heartily embrace M. de Grignan; all his concerns are mine; I find myself attached to you and to him by a thousand ties. I grieve at the miserable situation the poor Chevalier is in. My dear Marquis, I love you dearly. Again I turn to you, my amiable child; but I need not say what my feelings are towards you: you know them well.

LETTER 773

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Bourbon, Saturday, September 27, 1687.

There are certain hours which we can devote to writing in this place, and this is one of them. I received yours with all the joy and emotion you are so well acquainted with; for it is certain that you love me. There is a young lady in this place, who pretends to love her mother, and who says and does many agreeable things to prove it, but she is a hundred steps behind you; this lady is Madame de Nangis [1].

We have many cripples here, and other poor souls at death's door, who seek relief in the scalding waters of the wells; some miss, others find it; the majority of the afflicted have apoplexy, or the remains of apoplexy: it is this that kills. I have sent for the Vichy waters, as M. Fagon's wife and many others have done; they are just

[1] Daughter of Madame de Rochefort.

heated in a manner that pleases me; they have the same taste, and nearly the same strength, as at Vichy; they answer their purpose fully, as I experienced with pleasure this morning. I shall continue them for a week, by Alliot's [1] advice, and shall not be pumped by Amiot's [2] direction, who assigned his reasons to you. When you have read his magic, by which you will not be the wiser, you may send it to Alliot; in the meantime I shall proceed in the way I have hitherto done. On Saturday I shall resume the waters of this place, and indulge myself in its agreeable baths: Amiot proposes to heat the water to a degree sufficient to make me perspire moderately. For my part, I leave every cock master of his own dunghill, not doubting that a man of his experience must know what is best for me. I wish you would write a line or two, expressing the good opinion you have of his skill; and let me entreat you not to be uneasy, for you may expect to see me in a few days perfectly well.

It is my earnest prayer to heaven to preserve M. de Grignan and you, and to increase the Chevalier's stock of patience. You also seem to stand in need of a considerable portion, to undergo all that has happened to you; and if one dared to think at Bourbon, the idea would be overwhelming: but here we are mere automatons; our ill-organised machines receive and pay visits; but we give up all pretensions to having souls, as such companions would be very troublesome to us while we are taking the waters; we shall find our souls again, when we get to Paris.

You keep up so obligingly all the correspondence with our friends, that I need not desire you to remember poor Corbinelli now and then, and to love him as well as you know I love him; I heartily wish him that happiness; it is the greatest, I think, that can happen to him. Madame de Chaulnes enters my room: she scolds me, she cannot tell why, and "embraces her charming Comtesse." All Bourbon is employed in writing to-day, to-morrow all

[1] The physician Madame de Sévigné had consulted at Paris.

[2] The physician who had the care of her at Bourbon.

Bourbon will be employed in a different manner. It is a kind of convent. You talk of the dews, my child—where are we to find them? We ought to have a little good air, for there are no dinners, no suppers, no merry-makings; however, I hope to make amends for this in the winter, in our own charming inn.

LETTER 774

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Bourbon, Tuesday, October 7, 1687.

So, you take it in your head to scold me, my dear Comtesse, instead of giving me joy of being better than I ever was in my life, and of having saved myself the trouble of a journey to Vichy! Have I not sent for the waters from that place? Have they not had the desired effect of gently evacuating the humours? I no longer stand in need of the violent operations that were necessary some years ago. M. Mansart is here, to breathe a little, after the violent evacuations he experienced at Vichy; many others are come hither from thence for the same purpose. However, during the week that I took the Vichy waters, I found benefit from them; but then I had recourse to the Bourbon waters afterwards, to calm and comfort me. It is an universally received opinion in this place, that where there are no great quantity of humours to evacuate, the waters of Bourbon are of a mild and sanative quality, which cannot fail of restoring a weak constitution; they convey a balsamic nourishment through the whole system. As to the country, I do not pretend to place it in competition with Vichy; it would be to compare a little Paradise with almost infernal regions. But, in short, I have taken the waters of Vichy for a week, and those of Bourbon as long; in the intervals I have used de Lorme's powder, and find myself perfectly well; I have not the least appearance of vapours; I look well, and feel well.

If there was any necessity of being pumped, Amiot, I am sure, would not have spared me. You are angry with me also for writing; my dear child, it is one of my greatest pleasures, and I should die without this amusement; everybody here writes: I scribbled half a dozen lines indeed to Madame de La Fayette; but do you call that writing?

The weather here is now delightful. I rejoice to find that the Chevalier is well enough to join us in the last melancholy farewell to Livry; it was all I desired, either to see you settled there, or at least able to go there. We shall be in Paris by the nineteenth of this month, according to our present plan; I shall embrace there Madame de La Fayette, and Madame de Lavardin, and then be off to meet my dear child, to breathe the fresh air of Livry, and stretch my legs a little: this will put the finishing-hand to the benefit I have received from the waters.

If you return to Paris to receive me, you know it would give me infinite pleasure; but do not fatigue yourself by coming too far; let us only meet again, and we will pass all the time together that our destiny will permit. But I dare not reckon too much upon any schemes that please me, lest Providence should have ordained otherwise; yet there are certain things, I think, which must happen of course. I hope my friend Corbinelli will come to us at Livry; we will make the most of these last moments, till some one comes and turns us out by the shoulders [1].

How can you suppose that writing to you can fatigue me? on the contrary, it is a great relief and comfort to me; it is my only delight. Make my most affectionate compliments to the Chevalier; would to God he were as well as I am! Madame de Chaulnes has already taken her measures for setting out for Chaulnes, in three days after she returns to Paris. This is the natural effect of the life we lead here, every person wishes to fly into the country for rest. Madame de Nangis is already gone to a château of her husband's, about nine leagues from hence.

[1] The Abbey of Livry had been vacant from the 23rd of August, by the death of the Abbé de Coulanges, Madame de Sévigné's uncle.

You talk of the baths of Vichy, they are nothing; those of Bourbon are far superior to them, and are indeed admirable for the gout, and a thousand other disorders. For my part, I am very well pleased with my journey; I know the bottom of the sack; my apprehensions were much greater than my maladies. If you love me, and are pleased with the care that is taken of me, how will you be able to repay the friendly attention of the Duchesse de Chaulnes?

LETTER 775

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Bourbon, Thursday, October 9, 1687.

You were in a very ill humour with me, my child, when last you wrote to me; I know the source from whence it sprung, and I am sensible how much you love me; but really, the injustice of your accusation makes me out of humour in my turn. You and Madame de La Fayette join in blaming me for not having quitted Madame de Chaulnes at Nevers. In answer to this, I have to tell you, in the first place, that it was not her fault that I did not do so; but I affirm, that I never took a better step than the one you blame: in the second place, I do not stand so much in need of the waters of Vichy as I formerly did; I have made all the use of them that was necessary, by mixing them with those of Bourbon. I have had the benefit of the most delightful baths imaginable; and, in short, I have gone through the whole course of medicines that were proper for me, with an ease and regularity that I could never have done had not Madame de Chaulnes been with me. We shall set out from hence on Monday, after having made a stay of three weeks and a day; during which time we have drank the waters sixteen days, bathed nine times, taken medicine three, and two days we rested. I defy anything to be better conducted than all this; my

friend shows a regard and care of me almost equal to yours; she is entitled to the most grateful acknowledgments; and yet you consider her as having overturned the whole plan of my cure. For heaven's sake, my child, adopt an opinion more consistent with justice and the love you bear me; and when me meet at Essonne, if you intend to meet us there, let there be nothing but joy to see us in such good health, and gratitude to the good Duchesse.

We shall take two days to go from hence to Nevers, that we may not fatigue ourselves; Wednesday we shall leave Nevers, and the fifth day, which will be Sunday the nineteenth, we shall dine at Essonne, and sleep at Paris. I should be sorry to occasion you any trouble or fatigue, otherwise you may judge whether we should give you a hearty reception if you were to meet us at Essonne to dinner.

Amiot writes to you by this post; he is an excellent physician; and there is a little apothecary in this place, who is prudence, capacity, and experience itself; both concurred in assuring me there was no occasion for the pump; they feared it would disorder the system too much, and put the nerves in mind of something they were not at present thinking of. In short, they are justly held in the highest esteem by everyone here, as persons who have honesty enough to condemn what they think is not right, even though they themselves by mistake may have first prescribed it.

You say I write to all the world: I write to no one but you, my dear child; for I do not call it writing, to send two short notes to Madame de La Fayette, and four lines in answer to Madame de Coulanges. But a word of the weather: it is a kind of enchantment; it is as if you had made it yourself on purpose for me; it is as warm as Midsummer; this will make you love poor Livry: I hope you are there; the very idea gives me pleasure. If you will wait for me there, and only send me your carriage, I will be with you in an instant from Paris. If you come to Paris to meet me, it will be a different thing; or you

may come only half-way between Paris and Essonne: in short, do what you think will occasion you the least fatigue: however, if you should resolve to go as far as Essonne, do not travel fourteen leagues in a day; but sleep on Saturday night at Savigny, and on Sunday you may easily be at Essonne to dinner.

Madame de Chaulnes desires me to make you a thousand compliments in her name, which you are to consider as real expressions of friendship: she has nothing so much at heart, as to give a good account of your poor mamma. We have heard a thousand stories of Brittany that have diverted us extremely; but our chief pleasure is, that we shall set out on Monday, after having observed punctually all the ceremonial of Bourbon.

LETTER 776

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Milly, Saturday night, October 18, 1687.

I have received your letter, and find it full of love and remembrance. I wrote to you from the Red House, about six leagues from hence, by which you will find that there would have been some difficulty in getting Madame de Chaulnes to have taken Fontainebleau in our way, because there are so many persons of her acquaintance there, that it would have been impossible for her to have concealed herself. But I should have seen there all I wished to see [1]. I am so well, and my spirits and health are on such good terms, that I see no reason why you should not love me. Our journey has been a mere airing, we have experienced no inconvenience. But you say not a word of Livry: cruel creature! to deny me that pleasure. I will wait for you till Monday, since you wish it; I would willingly make you much greater sacrifices, otherwise I should have been

[1] Madame de Grignan was then at Fontainebleau with the Court.

glad to have seen my two good friends (La Fayette and Lavardin), and to have set out immediately afterwards for Livry; but this I shall not now think of, but wait with the utmost eagerness to embrace you. If you were to be as expeditious as ourselves, I should not wait long. I hope you will send *La Brie* back to me to-morrow to Essonne. Adieu, my dearest! I am rejoiced that you are likely to settle all your affairs, and make your *court* by continuing *at Court*. Madame de Chaulnes embraces you, and exults not a little in the excellent state of health in which she will restore me to you. Embrace Madame de Vins for me, but do not suffer her to steal your heart, though it would be pardonable if you did.

[*N.B. The Mother and Daughter were not again separated from each other till the beginning of October*, 1688.]

*LETTER 777

From M. DE CORBINELLI *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

October 24, 1687.

Your letter, my dear *reprobate*, has given me very great pleasure: I have read it again and again with attention; and have found in it the epistolary eloquence, which charms everyone by whom it is understood. Now I pretend to be one of the very best judges of this style; and if my practice kept pace with my theory, I would defy you, and Cicero, and Pascal, and Voiture, and everyone else. Be assured, my silence does not spring from forgetfulness; I am generally plunged in the first, but always free from the second. I talk of you when and as often as I can; this phrase is not correct; it ought to be—as you express it. I assert, that you have more wit than all Languedoc together, even when the States are assembled there. I said this, two days ago, to your first President, Nicolaï;

who desired me to request you to bespeak him a dozen bottles of thyme water, convinced you would willingly take this trouble on his account. *La Faveur* will prepare it, and the price is no object; at least, you have only to send me the bill.

You ask me in what study I am engaged; to which I answer, that having read a considerable portion of history, and a good many books of modern politics, I have found something to amuse me in the propositions of Molinos, and as I have been assured they are conformable to the sentiments of St. Thérèse and other mystics, I have read the *Château de l'Ame*, and the rest of this author's works, in which I have indeed found all the doctrines of the aforesaid heretic. I intend to read shortly, *Le Chrêtien intérieur* (The Inward Christian), by a recluse, published by Bernières, Treasurer of France, at Caen. If you ask, of what use the study of this mystical theology can be to me, I shall not be able to inform you; but I defy all the directors to know as much of the subject as myself, or to understand better the folds of the heart, as it relates to Christian holiness. I would rather, however, study the feudal laws with you, though you judges form your statutes upon very doubtful principles, and always take it for granted, with respect to revenues, "that there is no Manor without a Lord." To which we may oppose, that there is no servitude without a title: it is for the plaintiff to prove this; is it true or false? as you please, Judge Feudal.

Yes, M. de Vardes has told me what he did for you, or rather for himself, knowing that the person who acts for you has always the profit. The Court monopolizes him; he is a great personage there: he is a free courtier, whom the master treats well, and to whom he always talks, and there is no parade or affectation on either side. Adieu; I do what I can to prevent Madame de Sévigné from writing to you, but alas! my efforts are ineffectual. Pray tell me if you think the final letter of a word should be pronounced before a word beginning with a vowel, in poetry; as when we say, "Il faut *aimer*, mais *aimer* autrement:"

we are very much divided here upon this question [1]. Adieu, my dear *reprobate*: while I live I will not forget you, and for what more can I answer? My compliments to your family.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

(*Enclosed in M.* DE CORBINELLI'S *letter.*)

It is not he who has prevented me from writing; so put your little Rambouillet sword again into its scabbard. Here follows, Sir, a long list of reasons, good or bad. First, I well remember that I wrote to you last, and that you neglected me, and made me pine for your answer; I had afterwards the grief of seeing my dear uncle, the Abbé de Coulanges, decline, and at length expire, whom I had so many reasons to love, who was my father and my benefactor, to whom I owed all the quiet and happiness of my life, by the attentions he paid to my affairs. I have bitterly lamented him, and shall lament him as long as I live; and not only him, but the Abbey, the charming Abbey, to which I took you, which occasioned you to make so pretty a couplet on the road, and where my son entertained us so highly, by the enthusiasm with which he repeated to us a whole scene from *Mithridate*, with proper tones and ges-

[1] This question of prosody is not without its difficulties, even in the present day.

In conversation, where affectation is particularly avoided, the *r* in the word *aimer*, when it precedes a word beginning with a consonant, is not sounded: in this case, no doubt, it ought to be pronounced like *aimé*.

But in an argumentative or declamatory speech, either at the bar or in the theatre, we think the *r* should be articulated, as well before a consonant as a vowel. The author of an article on Grammar in the *Decade Philosophique* of the year 1806, No. 19, is of a different opinion. The sensible pronunciation of the *r* in these cases, appears to him an affectation of the stage. It is possible that some may sound this letter too harshly. But this abuse proves nothing against the principle, which is important. It tends to render the phrase perspicuous, by distinguishing the infinitive from the participle, an essential advantage when the speaker is in a large room, and addressing a numerous audience. It is also of consequence to harmony, by introducing another sonorous final in a language which has but too many silent syllables. Many persons affirm, and we are amongst them, that Le Kain could give force to these final letters without cacophony or pedantry. This theatrical tradition is true; but taste must regulate practice.

tures, seated on a throne of turf in a little wood, and so surprised our weak minds, that you thought you were at the theatre when you least expected it.

A month after the death of this dear uncle, I resolved to go to Bourbon, which I had deferred doing, from the fear of leaving him. I took this journey in company with the Duchesse de Chaulnes, and was cured of the apprehension that I had a certain disorder called the vapours, which I believed of consequence, and was told it was not so; true or false, I am satisfied, and I do not repent my journey. I have been returned these six days, and my daughter tells me, that you wrote in my absence to rouse me: well, my dear Sir, I am roused. I am told also, for it is hearsay only, Madame de Grignan having taken care to lose your letter, that you have a maxim, that it is easier to separate ourselves from the world, than to reconcile our hearts to the forgetfulness of our friends. Is this your opinion? If it is, I have ample scope to encourage you; for I can say seriously, that of all men in the world, you are the one whom I forget the least. When you are known, and the charms of your mind, and the goodness of your heart, are appreciated, it is not easy to efface you; you make a lasting impression. I speak of you whenever an opportunity offers, and your rival is always disposed to hear me. I talk of you also to others, in season and out of season: in short, Sir, remove from your vexations, that of believing it is easy to forget you; tell your maxim that its reflection is no longer capable of humiliating you, and that I still feel towards you as I have always felt, and shall feel for you in the same manner all the rest of my life.

*LETTER 778

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, November 5, 1687.

I have been very uneasy about you, my dear cousin, since our friend informed me you were gone to Bourbon. I should have expressed my uneasiness sooner, if I had not intended to go to Fontainebleau, and from thence to Paris, for the sole purpose of seeing you. But a bad cold has spoiled my plan; for though I am now nearly well, the season is not favourable for travelling, with the remains still upon me of my indisposition. This induces me to entreat you to let me hear from you. If your disorder be a rheumatism in the right arm, which was attacked eight or ten years ago, desire our friend to write for you. I have always loved you, my dear cousin; our little quarrels have even been a proof that you were not indifferent to me: but I have never loved or esteemed you so much as I do at present. What makes me know this is, that I tremble more at the apprehension of losing you, than I used to do. What could I do in the world without you, my poor dear cousin? In whom could I have so full a confidence of being beloved? With whom could I laugh? With whom could I display my wit? To whom could I talk so unreservedly upon so many subjects? For the beautiful Madelonne, though one of my friends, is not you, and could not supply your place to me. Her husband and family occupy her whole heart and mind. I should only have your niece, and our friend, left; and, far from comforting me under the loss, they would make me remember and regret you still more. Be careful of yourself, therefore, my dear cousin, and join to your own interest, the consideration of the happiness of Madame de Grignan, and of us, your best friends. I have had philosophy enough to dispense with the honours and establishments

I believed to be my due; but I should not have a sufficient stock to be able to dispense with you: nothing but pure Christianity would serve me in any stead.

*LETTER 779

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, November 13, 1687.

I have just received from you, my dear cousin, the most delightful and affectionate letter possible. I have never seen friendship expressed so naturally, and in a manner so calculated to carry conviction with it. And it has had its effect: I believe my life necessary to the preservation of yours. I will give you, therefore, an account of it, to cheer you, and that you may understand exactly the state of my health.

I go back to the last days of my dear uncle the Abbé, to whom you well know I was under infinite obligations. It was to him I owed the comfort and happiness of my life; it is to him you owe the pleasure you have experienced in my society: but for him, we should never have laughed together; you are indebted to him for all my gaiety, my good humour, sprightliness, the gift of understanding you, the intelligence which made me comprehend what you had said, and guess what you were going to say: in short, the good Abbé, in extricating me from the abyss in which I was left at the death of M. de Sévigné, made me what I was, what you have seen me, and worthy your friendship and esteem. I draw a veil over your wrongs: they are great, but I must forget them, and tell you how keenly I have felt the loss of this agreeable source of all the happiness of my life. He died after a fever of seven days, like a young man, with sentiments of piety that affected me; for God has given me principles of religion which have made me view properly this last scene of life. His had lasted for eighty years; he lived in honour, and died

a Christian: God grant that we may do the same. It was at the end of August that I wept his loss. I should never have quitted him, had he lived as long as I may live. But finding myself too much at liberty about the middle of September, I resolved to go to Vichy, to cure my imagination at least, of a sort of convulsions in my left hand, and of visionary vapours, which made me apprehensive of apoplexy. This projected journey gave the Duchesse de Chaulnes the desire of taking it at the same time. I joined her; and as I had a wish to return to Bourbon, I did not leave her: I sent for a quantity of the Vichy waters, which, heated in the well at Bourbon, are admirable. I drank some of these, and then some of the Bourbon waters, which made an excellent mixture. The two rivals are reconciled to each other: they have but one heart and one soul: Vichy reposes on the bosom of Bourbon, and warms herself by its fireside, that is, in the bubblings of its fountain. I have been so well, that when I asked to use the pump it was denied me, on the plea that my health did not require it: the doctors laughed at my complaints, treated them as visionary, and sent me back as a person in perfect health. They so positively assured me of this, that I have believed it, and I consider myself to-day as upon this footing. My daughter is delighted at it; you know how she loves me.

Such, my dear cousin, is my situation. As your health depends on mine, here is salutary provision for you. Be careful of your cold, and, in the same manner, make me continue well. We must go on together, and not forsake each other. I returned from Bourbon three weeks ago; our pretty little Abbey was not then disposed of; we spent twelve days there: at length it has been given to the old Bishop of Nîmes, a very worthy prelate. I left it three days ago, painfully affected at bidding adieu for ever to this delightful retreat, to which I was so much attached: after weeping for the resident, I wept for the residence.

I know you wrote to me during my journey to Bour-

bon; I have not wasted my time in answering you, but have given the reins to the temptation of talking of myself, without curb or limitation. I ask your pardon, and assure you that I will not indulge so much in this liberty another time; for I know, and it is Solomon who says it, that "he who talketh much of himself is despised." Our friend Corbinelli says, that to judge how much we weary others by talking of ourselves, we have only to recollect how much others, by talking of themselves, weary us. This rule is general enough; but I think I can find an exception to it to-day, for I should be glad if your pen were as inconsiderate as mine, and should be delighted if you would talk to me a great deal of yourself. It is this feeling that has induced me to enter into so terrific an account: and, in confidence of the same feeling on your part, I shall make no apologies; but embrace you, my dear cousin, and you, my dear Coligny. I return Madame de Bussy a thousand thanks for her remembrance: it would be easier to kill me, than to make me write a word more.

*LETTER 780

From M. DE CORBINELLI *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

Monday, November 24, 1687.

I should have answered your letter, my friend, three posts ago, if an opportunity had offered of communicating your wishes to the first President of Accounts: but he was in the country, and afterwards at Versailles: at last, I have told him of your intention to make him a present of twelve bottles of thyme-water, to which he would not at first agree; but as I represented to him, that he might repay you this gift by another, if I could prevail on you to accept it, he consented, and will receive the case, his valet having taken the letter of directions for that purpose. I doubt whether the case be arrived; be that as it

may, I will be your second agent in this affair till the business be completed, and in the interim, you will take possession of his friendship, as he does of yours. I have told him you were one of his father's friends, and one of the best friends of M. de Vardes, which gives you a new claim with him. He took me to the admission of a Master of Accounts, who is a relation of mine, and I heard the law, *Desiderium meum rationibus tuis non congruit,* etc., attacked and defended. The question of the deposit was agitated, and your first President argued admirably. I tell you all this as I go along, to remind you, that I am still passionately attached to jurisprudence; but this attachment has not prevented me from reading the works of St. Thérèse, in which I think I have found all the opinions of Molinos. I have made a collection of the Christian or mystical maxims of this saint; I have conferred with very learned Cartesians upon the subject, who all believe that equivocal meanings, which tend in the least degree towards paradoxy, occasion their authors to be burned, according as their judges are more or less ignorant: now we hold for certain, that those who compose the tribunal of the Inquisition, are so in the superlative degree. Cardinal Petrucci is in waiting for them, and he may wait long enough, for they dare not attack him, because he has sense and learning, added to high rank. I shall read two or three mystics, after I have finished *The Inward Christian.* All this, my friend, does not advance me one step in devotion; on the contrary, it rather sends me farther back: the distinctions of vocal orisons, mental orisons, meditation, union, and quietude, only serve to bewilder the mind, and, in the end, mean only more or less attention to prayer, and more or less charity, which I knew before. But it is not science which inspires devotion; it is only the grace of God. Adieu, my friend; my jealousy is continually increasing: I embrace you cordially.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

(*Enclosed in M.* DE CORBINELLI'S *letter.*)

I never met with such rivals; I think we may say of them, as of the two knights-errant: *O gran bontà de' cavalieri antichi*[1]. I ask your pardon for the last word (ancient); but your harmony called forth this application.

I have received your last letter, Sir; it pleases me, as everything does that comes from your pen. I have talked of you to M. de La Trousse: the relish he has for your society, raises him considerably in my esteem. We should not be cousins, if he did not feel all the charms and solidity of your merit; he appears to me fully sensible of it, but I fancy I should derive greater benefit than he, if Providence had placed me within the reach of profiting by it; alas! there is a great gulf between us. If those who are erecting these Courts of Justice had been always as they are now, they would not have swallowed so many snakes in this country, which have been so unwholesome, that it was afterwards necessary to swallow an equal quantity of Jesuit's bark[2]. Another of the same species has had the same blow; it is well bestowed: these are strange lights to put upon the bushel; they should be put under it, that we might be ignorant of all their actions: *ma tace* (but be silent), I entreat, for I do not wish to create myself such enemies. In short, when I see M. de Vardes, instead of thanking him, I know I shall congratulate him, on the honour he has done himself, and the pleasure he has experienced, to be able, on so fortunate an occasion, to render justice to such a friend as you: ours appears to me immersed in speculative devotion. I always hope that in playing thus with it, it will some day seize him in good earnest, and that he will be ensnared in his meditations, as a bird in birdlime. It is certain that the world, and all that passes in it, seems unworthy his attention, and that

[1] Oh wonderful excellence of the ancient knights! [Translation.]

[2] She means M. de Vardes.

he spends his life in pious reflections, and the exercise of charity to his neighbour. It still seems to me as if God would make something extraordinary of him in the end. It is continually in my head to address God in the words of *Polyeucte,* speaking of Pauline's soul:

> Seigneur, de vos bontés il faut que je l'obtienne;
> Elle a trop de vertu pour n'être pas Chrétienne;
> Avec trop de mérite il vous plut la former,
> Pour ne vous pas connoître, et ne vous pas aimer [1].

You, Sir, seem to have grace of every kind, and particularly, it appears to me, the gift of perseverance, which is everything, and makes your life as uniform as the true friendship we entertain for you.

*LETTER 781

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, December 2, 1687.

I am delighted that I did not deceive myself in supposing my long letter would not tire you. The great interest you took in my health, and the blood which weakened me so much one day, in consequence of your having four pallets taken from your arm, without informing me of it, answered for you that my details would not displease you. I have been equally gratified with what you wrote to me. I have regretted the good Father Rapin. I agree with you respecting his good qualities. The benevolence and mildness of his disposition, with a capacity which would have made any other man vain, were what attached me principally to him. He now receives the reward of his virtues. Father Bouhours, however, who was his intimate friend, and whom I always accused of having drank the blood of Rapin, who was paler than death, has taken

[1] Lord, let me obtain this favour from thy bounty; she has too much virtue, not to be a Christian; thou hast formed her with too much merit, not to know and to love thee. [Translation.]

courage, and has given us a very amusing book, which is read with pleasure: it is entitled, "La Manière de bien penser sur les Ouvrages d'Esprit [1]". I would have said *juger*; for this is precisely what he does. For this inquiry he collects all that has been written and admired in prose and in verse, sometimes praising, sometimes blaming. We are almost always of his opinion, but now and then we criticise his criticism. You may suppose, this book is very amusing. I concluded he would make mention of you: but I can find but one passage where he cites you as an example. I doubt not that this Father has sent you the work. Our friend is highly entertained with it. All that decries unjust approbation, and treats of the accuracy of the understanding, is exactly calculated for him. I wish you perfect health. We are no longer young, my dear cousin; this is great pity. It seems to me, that we were heretofore more animated than the rest of the world, and that few persons were superior to us. I include our Corbinelli; for though his wit be still as good, and as lively, as at that period, he knows in his conscience that he cannot enjoy it so agreeably as he has done. Are you at Autun? Is your Bishop there? if he is, tell him I was so sure he would be here after Martinmas, that I have not answered a very charming letter he has written me on the death of my poor Abbé. Dispose him to forgive me, my assuring him that I expect him here with great impatience. You cannot suppose that I am less impatient to see you again in health and spirits, for this is the *tu autem,* and to talk to you on a thousand things which cannot be written. I embrace you, and the amiable Coligny, provided you receive the sincere regards of the beautiful Comtesse.

[1] "How to think rightly of Works of Wit." Besides this work, which was then very useful, the close of the year 1687 produced three other books by three new authors. These were, Fontenelle's *Eclogues*: the Poetical Works of Madame Deshoulières: and particularly the *Characters* of La Bruyère. The success of the latter was well known; malignity decried it; time has sanctioned it. Few writers have been so well appreciated as La Bruyère, in the excellent account of him by M. Suard.

M. DE CORBINELLI *also writes to the Comte* DE BUSSY.
(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter.*)

Father Bouhours would perhaps have done as well to have quoted fragments of your letters, and those of Madame de Sévigné, by way of examples of the propriety, delicacy, or noble simplicity of ideas, as of Balzac's and Voiture's. We will meet some day at M. de Lamoignon's to tell him our opinion, and that of the public, respecting his book; but the judgment of what is called the world in general, is commonly very insipid and very unpolished in this age, in which fine or good things are not understood, and in which there is no time for anything but calculations and attention to business. Misery suppresses wit; we are too much occupied with our wants, to attend to pretty things.

The same Father has lent me a book that has been written at Rome against the *Quiétistes*: the original is in Italian; and this is a good, easy, noble, and pleasing translation by Father B***. He combats the doctrine of one Molinos, the founder of the sect of these *Quiétistes* [1].

But to return to the book, "How to think rightly of Works of Wit," I must tell you, that the public opinion will neither prejudice nor seduce me, for I know that its opinions are generally the result either of envy or of ignorance. My compliments, if you please, to Madame de Coligny. I met Madame de Montataire the other day, with whom I laughed heartily. Madame de Sévigné says,

[1] It was in the same year, 1687, that the Spanish priest, Molinos, condemned at Rome by the Inquisition, had there publicly abjured his heresies. The abjuration was only for the public. It neither changed his fate nor his opinions. He was taken back to his dungeon, and, on entering it, he appealed from his sentence to the last decision. His system, or rather his reveries, were of the same kind as those of the ancient Gnostics. Quietism, which a few years afterward furnished the jealous hatred of Bossuet with new means of oppressing Fénélon, passed for an emanation of Molinosism. It is worthy of remark, that St. Thérèse had been allotted a place in heaven, for a mysticism similar to that which conveyed La Guyon to the tower of Vincennes; and that at the same time the doctors of Salamanca pretended to beatify Marie d'Agréda, whom the doctors of Paris anathemised, and both on account of the same visionary notions. Some absurdities, like some truths, have the same good or ill fortune attending them in the world.

that our ages are incompatible with mirth: I think she is wrong; there are different kinds of mirth. Ours at present is more solid than the mirth of our youth; and I am convinced, with Epicurus, that judgment is necessary to the enjoyment of pleasure. I even maintain that it is essential to voluptuousness. This subject is curious, choice, and useful; but, after all, there is no true pleasure but in the love of God; upon which I shall say, by the bye, that scarcely one of those who have written the most diffusively upon the subject, knows what this love means.

*LETTER 782

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, June 15, 1688.

We knew not what had become of you, my dear cousin. Corbinelli and I said: "If it were any other person, we should fear he had hanged himself"; but we cannot believe so fatal a thing of one of your disposition. At length, we have found you again, and in the best health possible. Ah! this is a great blessing, my dear cousin; and how well you describe it, when you say, it is one without which we are indifferent to all others! Preserve it, then, as carefully as you can; it is one in which fortune has no share, and which makes us endure all the evils she can inflict. I own that the grace of God is a very good staff: you are ably supported, therefore; those who appear the happiest, are not always the most so in reality. In short, our machines are strangely fragile, and the part the soul takes in our good or bad dispositions is no less strange. That of our Comtesse of Provence is very much agitated by the commencement of the solicitations. All the Grignans are arrived from every quarter to second her. Still she is sensible to your remembrance and esteem; and sends you and my niece de Coligny a thousand kind remembrances in return.

I must say two words, my dear niece, to you. I see plainly, that you are running away with my cousin, to take him to the old family château of Coligny. I could wish to read there the history of the Admiral and the other great personages, to admire their merit and modesty, in comparison with the ostentation of the present age. I can easily conceive, my dear cousin, the attachment you have to Chaseu. It has natural beauties which you would sell very dear, if they could be disposed of.

The Duc de Valentinois has espoused Mademoiselle d'Armagnac. My daughter is returned, charmed with the beauty of the spectacle; Mademoiselle d'Armagnac, handsome, lovely, loaded with jewels, and her train borne by her sister, still more handsome, and younger than herself. All the beauty of the Court was compressed into this family, for M. and Madame d'Armagnac were also admirable in their kind.

Adieu, my dear relatives. If you see M. and Madame de Toulongeon [1] again, you may with a safe conscience assure them of my delight at being remembered by them, and that I am their very humble servant.

M. DE CORBINELLI *also writes to the Comte* DE BUSSY.
(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter.*)

I have taken great interest, Sir, in your perfect resignation to the decrees of Providence, and your letter has served to make me thoroughly understand the advantage of this conduct. Your example, joined to my own ideas, will confirm me more and more in my resolution to imitate you. There are situations where it is difficult not to repeat this so often reiterated verse:

La constance est ici d'un difficile usage [2].

But we become accustomed to everything. The longer I live, the more I find the paradox true, that all men are equally happy and miserable. It has been very

[1] Madame de Toulongeon was Bussy's sister.

[2] Constancy is difficult to practise. [Translation.]

useful to me since I have rightly understood it. To this end, I suppose a beggar, sixty years of age, to be in an hospital, with violent headaches, which seize him regularly every other day; he is, besides, paralysed on one side, and subject to a nephritic colic. On the other hand, I suppose a King of the age of thirty, handsome, well-made, victorious in arms, and sound both in body and in mind; and I say that the beggar is as happy as the King, or, at least, that he is not more miserable. If this be true, as I believe it to be, no one should complain of his situation. Draw a comparison between the blessings and misfortunes of these two personages, their pleasures and their pains, and I am convinced you will be of my opinion.

I have lately translated two Greek Orations from the Latin version, one of Isocrates, the other of Demosthenes, in order to judge of their eloquence by comparing them with the moderns: but I find there are perfections and defects everywhere, according to the taste of the age.

*LETTER 783

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, August 13, 1688.

I always felt confidence, my dear cousin, in your happy disposition, and though I know some people who would have hanged themselves in the situation in which you left this place [1], the past was in some degree a surety to me for the future. It seemed to me

> Qu'un mont pendant en précipices,
> Qui, pour les coups du désespoir,
> Sont aux malheureux si propices [2],

was by no means the road you would take. And, indeed,

[1] Bussy had lost a law-suit which had caused him to feel very dejected and downhearted.

[2] That a mountain hanging in precipices, so propitious to the unfortunate suffering from the wounds of despair. [Translation.]

you are right; life is short, and you are already far advanced: it is not worth while to be impatient. This consolation is melancholy, and the remedy worse than the disease; but it must produce its effect, as well as the idea, which is scarcely less enlivening, of the little room we occupy in the great universe, and of how little consequence it will be at the end of the world, whether there existed a Comte de Bussy happy or miserable. I know, that for the short period we are here, we could wish to be happy; but we ought to persuade ourselves that nothing is more impossible, and that if you had not to endure the mortifications you suffer at present, you would be obliged to submit to others which it might please Providence to inflict upon you. For instance, it is now his will that your German cousin should be romantically transplanted, and to appearance happily. But we have not a clear insight into things; and Providence has led us through such extraordinary roads, so distant from the point of guessing at the end of the romance, that we can draw no inference, and need not ascribe to ourselves any reproach. We must, therefore, return from whence we set out, and submit without a murmur to whatever it shall please God to do with us.

I know not how I have embarked in these moral reflections; I leave them, by saying, that the Marquis de Villars [1] is returned from Germany, and tells us wonders of our cousin. I have to inform you that my daughter has gained her law-suit, costs and all, without a dissentient voice. This is remarkable. A great burden is thus removed from the shoulders of the whole family: it was a persecuting dragon for six years; but to the dragon which is destroyed, another will succeed; which is the dragon of separation. Does not this exactly apply to what I said of the ways of Providence? My daughter and I must bid adieu, one for Provence, the other for Brittany: for it is thus, apparently, that Providence is about to dispose of

[1] This is the Maréchal de Villars, of whom some interesting memoirs are still extant.

us. It has killed the niece of our Corbinelli in a strange way. She and her uncle had borrowed a friend's carriage: a man who had never driven, rashly harnessed young horses that had never been broken in: he mounted the box: they set off, dashing, rearing, tearing, beating everything to pieces. One horse fell, the pole beat in the panels of another carriage, from whence jumped three men with drawn swords: a mob collected; one of these men was on the point of running Corbinelli through the body: "Alas! gentlemen," said he, "you would gain nothing by it, the coachman does not belong to me, we are still more vexed with him than you can be." This man then became his protector, and drew him from the populace, but he could not extricate his poor niece from the extreme alarm into which she had been thrown, and she returned home in such a state of agitation, that she was seized with a fever in the evening, and died four days afterwards. She has been generally lamented by those who knew her. The philosophy of our friend has not prevented him from weeping over her, but I hope, in the end, it will be the source of consolation to him. To that I commend him; for I have not the vanity to believe that, in an event of this nature, I can at all contribute to his comfort. I leave, however, the pen to him, my dear cousin, after having embraced you and my amiable niece with my whole heart; for I include her, as well as you, in this long, tiresome letter. I say tiresome, because, as it has not amused me in writing, I cannot suppose it will amuse you in reading. I should very much like to embrace dear little Marquis de Coligny. My daughter sends you both a thousand kind remembrances; she prides herself on being grateful for the friendship and esteem you bear her. I can easily imagine, that if you were young, she would occupy the first place in your heart. I must return to you once more, to tell you how glad I am that you are pleased with the second volume of *Abbadie*[1]. You know how I have extolled it

[1] Abbadie, a Calvinistic priest, published at that time his *Traité de la Verité de la Religion Chrétienne* (Treatise on the Truth of the

as the most divine of books. This esteem is general; and the first who mentioned it to me in raptures was our dear friend. It is worthy of your and my niece's perusal. I think religion was never handled as it has been by this man.

*LETTER 784

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, August 26, 1688.

You will see, my dear cousin, by a long letter I wrote to you, and which I gave to my niece de Montataire to convey to you, that I did not fail to inform you of the complete victory my daughter has obtained over her opponents, without a dissentient voice, and all her costs paid. If I did not inform you of this quite as soon as I informed M. d'Autun, it is, that, having written to you a day after I wrote to him, we were played a trick of chicanery, which interrupted our joy in some degree, by the fear of not having our judgment signed before the breaking up of the Parliament; but this evil being remedied, I wrote you a long letter, which you must now have received. You will not therefore be jealous of the prelate; and you will believe that no change has taken place in my heart, which can lead me to give him the preference to you. We wish to live amicably with Fortune, by forgiving her conduct towards you, in consideration of her kindness to your friends. There is always room for consolation, if we trace her whole conduct; for she often renders so many miserable, that we may say in the words of the opera:

Christian Religion), admired even by the Catholics. It is well known that he afterwards wished to prove from the *Revelations* what he had established by argument. Voltaire has been blamed for having said, that by this last work he injured the first; "as if," says the critic, "Newton had injured his system by commenting on the *Apocalypse*!" But this commentary of Newton's was not made to prove attraction; and in spite of the critic, Voltaire's remark holds good.

Goûtons l'unique bien des cœurs infortunés,
Ne soyons pas seuls misérables [1].

Those who are disposed to be patient, and to take comfort, find reasons everywhere, and this is, in reality, great wisdom; the contrary appears to me the height of folly, and deplorably useless. I am still charmed that you like *Abbadie*. Our friend was the first to pay him a tribute of esteem, and to yield to the force of his arguments. Next him, I wished you to be convinced, and you are so. This taste has been universal; but still it is a great advantage to us, and we owe this man a great obligation for having taken away our miserable doubts, and so ably answered a thousand objections which appeared strong; but everything gave way before him. We are ashamed at not having thought all he has said; he informs and convinces us of the truth and holiness of a religion, which we had only considered superficially. I think you and my niece express yourselves extremely well on the subject of this excellent man; we have said the same things, though in a different way.

You know that the young Villars, son of *Orondates*, who has returned from Germany, where he has acted well both for his reputation in the German war, and the negotiations in which he acquitted himself with credit, has had the promise of the office of Commissary-General of your late cavalry. He gives fifty thousand crowns for it to the Marquis de Montrevel. He sells his regiment for thirty thousand crowns to Blanchefort. Thus a man is placed in a situation where he will acquit himself well, at the eve of a war, which is now the public news. Troops are raised and sent into Germany. We are determined to begin, without waiting to be attacked. We are chagrined at the election of Liège, and at not having gained that of Cologne. The Pope, who is now master, is not well disposed towards us. We wish therefore to be in a situation

[1] Let us taste the only comfort of unfortunate hearts, let us not be the only persons who are wretched. [Translation.]

to answer for everything, and perhaps to attack the first. Time will tell us more. My dear cousin, and my dear niece, I constantly commend you to the charms of each other's society. This is a blessing in which fortune has no influence.

M. DE CORBINELLI *also writes to the Comte* DE BUSSY.
(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter.*)

I am delighted, Sir, that your taste agrees with ours with regard to *Abbadie*; it is a good sign for us: he is pursued by envy and criticism; but who does not, or has not, shared the same fate?

*LETTER 785

From Madame DE GRIGNAN *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, August 26, 1688.

You ask me, Sir, who are the persons with whom I have been at law? I am so tired of hearing the names of my enemies, that I cannot bring myself to mention them; I wish even to forget them, and my law-suit also. It is true, I have acquired great esteem with the attorneys; but I cannot keep pace with Madame de Montataire: she has only to ask and have, but I must defend myself. This difference in our success, makes the same difference in our happiness. Really, Sir, you are very much mistaken, in supposing I am more calculated to steal hearts than to gain law-suits; thank God, it is quite the contrary. Do me, therefore, no longer the injustice of omitting to reckon in the number of my perfections, that of understanding law admirably. But, Sir, at the very time I was hoping to enjoy the repose which my capacity has acquired me, I am terrified by a sound of war. I have a son, who has taken it into his head to be seventeen years of age; this is said to be the prime of life, not to go to law, but to go to war; and this induces me to wish he were older, to be

able to endure its fatigues, or younger, not to be exposed to them. But for this evil there is no remedy. In the midst of vexations or of repose, I am very sensible to the proofs of your friendship and esteem; I ask you to continue them to me, and assure you, that I love and respect you highly.

*LETTER 786

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

Friday, September 3, 1688.

I informed you, Sir, of the arrival of M. de Vardes at Court after his exile. I can now inform you of his arrival to-day in heaven; for every Christian may presume on his neighbour's salvation, when he expires in the bosom of the church with all its sacraments. This poor man, after a long and tedious illness, as you know, at length put himself under the care of M. Sanguin. At first, his restoring medicines seemed to have revived him; but nature not assisting these admirable cordials, he sunk again, and for four days struggled with death, sometimes at the last gasp, sometimes taking quinquina, then sinking again in such a way, that his daughter left him more than two days ago in a fainting fit resembling death, and M. de Rohan very inconsiderately placed his red porter in the room of the green, and then, ashamed of his impudence, placed the green in the room of the red; but at three o'clock in the afternoon he was enabled to reinstate the red in perfect safety; for it was at that hour M. de Vardes expired with great pain, and talking to the last. He has written to the King, imploring his pardon again, and his favour for his children. I know not whether he has asked the government or the blue justaucorps for M. de Rohan [1]. Our friend was named in a former will, which he destroyed,

[1] Louis de Rohan Chabot, Duc de Rohan, was the son-in-law of M. de Vardes.

but not in the last. The Bishop de Mirepoix, who conducted him to heaven, asked him the reason of this omission, and he replied, that for some time Corbinelli had ridiculed him: this has not appeared to anyone but himself; and seems to have been our poor friend's misfortune. The resignation of M. de Vardes was not disturbed by this: his director did not quit him; he made him receive the holy viaticum and extreme unction on his recovery from a long fit of stupor, and talked to him of God, rationally and simply. His family were not present: M. de Vardes appeared satisfied, and grateful for this important service; he had taken Madame d'Omelas and her family two days before to a ready-furnished house, where she wished to go. He saw her to-day: she weeps, but not ridiculously: he has left the cross of the Order, which the Grand Master gave him, to his successors, Messieurs de Roquelaure and de Foix; a large diamond to the Duchesse du Lude, because she has diamonds already to the value of fifty thousand crowns. I know no more; I regret him, because there is not a man at Court formed after his model. Adieu, excellent friend.

*LETTER 787

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, September 22, 1688.

It is true that I love the reputation of our German cousin. The Marquis de Villars told me wonders on his return from Vienna, of his valour and his merit, which seemed daily increasing, and of his wife, and the elegance of his house. You are the occasion, my dear cousin, of my writing to this Duchesse-Comtesse, by my sending her your packet. I admire, at all times, the sports and arrangements of Providence. It has decreed, that this Rabutin of Germany, our junior in every respect, should, by the most eccentric and cross roads, rise to high dignity

and be happy; and that a Comte de Bussy, the elder branch of his family, with great valour, wit, services, wealth, and even the most brilliant post in war, should be the most unhappy man of the French Court. Oh Providence, do as thou thinkest fit! thou art the sovereign disposer of all things, and so far above us, that we must adore thee under all thy dispensations, and kiss the hand which strikes and chastises us; for in thy sight we all deserve to be punished. I am very melancholy, my dear cousin; our beloved Comtesse of Provence, whom you love so much, is going to leave us in a week; this separation breaks my heart, and obliges me to go to Brittany: I have a great deal of business there, but I feel that my journey proceeds more from a little amorous spite. I will have nothing to do with Paris without her; I am in rage with the whole world; I will bury myself in a desert. Well, good people! do you understand affection better than we do? We could give lessons to others; but indeed it is very painful to excel in this way: those who have so much sensibility are very unfortunate. Let us change the subject. You have heard of the death of your old friend Vivonne? He died suddenly, in a sound sleep, his head bewildered. The King goes to Fontainebleau on the twenty-eighth of this month. There is some other plan, which is kept secret. The active preparations, which were at first made for war, begin to slacken. The fleet of the Prince of Orange, which is ready to set sail, is alone worthy of attention. It is supposed to be directed against England. In the meantime our coasts are guarded: the Governors of Brittany and Normandy are sent home. All this looks very much overcast. A great many clouds are gathered: the unravelling of the plot merits not to be lost sight of.

M. DE CORBINELLI *also writes to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter.*)

Neither the Prince of Orange nor his allies have any design upon us. They are thinking only of England, or of preventing any attacks we might wish to make upon

them, by showing us that they have the means of defence, without intending to act upon the offensive. This is what I wish in the devices of politics [1]. Adieu, Sir, I thank you with all my heart for your condolence on the death of two persons, which afflicted me for two months. My turn will come, when it pleases heaven. I know not whether it will grieve me; but I am sure it will not surprise me.

*LETTER 788

From M. DE CORBINELLI *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

Wednesday, September 22, 1688.

Nothing, Sir, was ever better thought, or better expressed, than the reasoning in your letter. The world here is dissatisfied that M. de Vardes should have left me nothing. I am delighted that the world at Languedoc has been of the same opinion. I was by no means the slave, and still less the friend, of the last Vardes; I mean him who succeeded the first: a year ago the first honoured me in his will; but the last caused it to be torn in pieces twenty-five days before his death. These were two persons of a very different character in many respects, but particularly in what related to me. If the first could have survived the last, he would have laughed at his successor upon this subject, as well as upon many others; he had fallen, as it were, not into delirium, but folly. His intention was, to end his life in Languedoc, and this desire was so strong as to have become his ruling passion; after which followed love for **** and hatred for his son-in-law; which was stronger

[1] It is known how completely Louis XIV. was deceived with respect to the plans of the Prince of Orange. His two ambassadors, d'Avaux, who was at the Hague, and Barillon, who was in London, made totally different reports, and gave contrary advice. The latter assured his sovereign, but was himself deceived by the false assurance of King James II.; and it was he who was believed. The English put to flight the ally of France, crowned his enemy, and Europe was engaged in war for nearly twenty-eight years.

than ——. These three passions accompanied him to the tribunal of God, where he could only defend the first by the spirituality of the second; with regard to the third, I can only say in the words of Juvenal, and I say it as from God, "Dic, Quintiliane, colorem." Some one told me, a fortnight before his death, that he had declared he would never forgive me for having given him such a son-in-law. I replied, that his son-in-law would never forgive me for having given him such a father-in-law. I desired the person who told me this, to tell him so from me; and, between ourselves, I had resolved never to see him again, and to send him word, that since he complained of me, he should have the pleasure of my absence till he asked my pardon for doing so. Death has calmed this tempest, and I have gained by it a tranquillity I little expected They talk here of disputing his donation to Madame d'Omelas; but, in my opinion, there is no chance of their succeeding. Adieu, my friend, continue to me the honour of your good opinion, unprejudiced by the rancour of jealousy.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

(*Enclosed in M.* DE CORBINELLI'S *letter.*)

Nothing scarcely is left to be said after a person who has expressed himself so well. I must, however, set you right with regard to what you have been told, that Madame d'Omelas had received, besides the donation, a quantity of plate, and two thousand pistoles: this is not true; on the contrary, he wished to give her a sum of money to return home, and she quitted the house abruptly; so abruptly that, as he was ill, it was supposed she was flying for assistance, and that he was dying; but, in reality, she flew from a sort of present, which, under such circumstances, excited her abhorrence. I have already told you, that this lady was very much liked in this country: her accent, her manners, her simplicity even, were taken in good part, which powerfully confirms what you say, that

our eyes are not the eyes we ought to have, if we would view things as Christians; but this fashion is so completely gone by, that the best women have not even retained the tradition of it. Adieu, my dear President: pity me; my daughter is going to Provence, and I am overwhelmed with grief: it is so natural to attach and accustom ourselves to the society of an amiable and beloved person, by whom too we are beloved in an equal degree, that this separation is indeed a martyrdom. If we could hope to meet again some day at Grignan, this would be a sort of consolation: but, alas! the prospect is distant, and the farewell near at hand. So we are soon to see M. de La Trousse. I have told M. de Carcassonne of the pleasure you have received from the success of this harangue to You know that M. du Maine has the charge of the gal- the King: it was, indeed, noble and good, like himself. leys, which M. de Vivonne formerly held: four hundred thousand francs have been given to Madame de Vivonne. You know all the news better than we do: I therefore conclude.

*LETTER 789

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Coligny, September 28, 1688.

All who are returned from Vienna, say the same things, Madame, of our cousin, as M. de Villars has told you. He and his wife are the ornament of the Emperor's Court. What you say of Providence on this subject is very true. I can make no addition to it, except that I receive all my misfortunes from the hand of God, as infallible proofs of predestination. The last time I saw Father de La Chaise, he told me, on my complaining of the severity of fortune, that it was a method God took of showing his love to me. I replied, that I believed it; that I saw plainly he wished to take me to himself, and that

he should have me, but that I had rather have obtained my salvation through the means of any other person than the King.

LETTER 790

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, October 8, 1688.

What a tremendous rain, just, my child, as you are going to descend that frightful mountain of Rochepot! How numberless are the vexations of those who love with any degree of fervour! we know not how to love heroically, notwithstanding the example of heroism below [1]: but there is no knowing you, without being attached to you with the greatest tenderness. Our poor hero is still dreadfully afflicted with the gout; it is a perfect martyrdom. There are several persons of wit and learning, as St. Romain [2], the Abbé Bigorre, Croisilles [3], who visit him, with a view to divert his painful moments with the news of the day, and other topics; but still he suffers greatly.

Our young Marquis could not have been at the opening of the trenches; for M. de Vauban could not wait the arrival of the Dauphin, on account of the rains: we are still persuaded, that in a very few days your mind will be at ease.

The Prince of Orange has declared himself protector of the religion of the Church of England, and has demanded the young Prince [4], that he may be brought up in that faith. This is a great event: several of the English nobility have joined him. You know that La Trousse

[1] Meaning the Chevalier de Grignan, who had a room downstairs in the Carnavalet Mansion, Madame de Sévigné's home in Paris.

[2] St. Romain had been Ambassador in Switzerland.

[3] Brother of Maréchal de Catinet, and a man of great merit. He had been captain of the French Guards, but had quitted the service on account of ill health.

[4] James, Prince of Wales, son of James II., born the 20th June, 1688; but better known afterwards by the name of the Pretender.

has taken Avignon [1]. Madame de Coulanges, who overflows with money, has lent Mademoiselle de Méri a thousand francs; we expect that lady here every day. M. de La Trousse (her brother) will very readily repay the loan.

I am much pleased, my dear child, that you approve the coming of the good Abbé Bigorre; his company will prove no small amusement to me. We entertain ourselves below stairs with frequent conversations upon the state of our affairs; I find there all the consolation that a sound understanding and a generous heart can afford me: for, the more the Chevalier is known, the more he must be esteemed and loved. I have no need to ask him, if you love me; for I am convinced of it by a thousand instances; but, without questioning him upon the subject, he gave me the most charming proofs of it. We eat together, and keep a very good table. The philosophy of Corbinelli is to come to-night; we have written in all our rooms: *Fais ce que tu voudras*; *vive la sainte liberté* [2]!

I have seen Madame de Fontenilles: she has lately lost her mother, and seems overwhelmed with grief; you will judge what impression this made upon me. Her mother died in a shocking way, crying out in all the agonies of despair, and terrified with the thought of taking the last sacraments; she received them, however, but with a gloomy and dreadful silence. Her son and Alliot arrived just two hours after her death.

Adieu, my beloved child; we know not what to do without you; every one exclaims,

Rien ne peut réparer les biens que j'ai perdus [3].

We are surrounded with your portraits. The Princesse is beautiful; but we still sigh for a certain person, who is at present in the midst of the sloughs of Rochepot.

[1] Some disputes that had happened between the Court of France and that of Rome, had obliged Louis XIV. to seize upon the county of Venaissin, belonging to the Pope.

[2] Do as you like: reign, sacred Liberty! [Translation.]

[3] Nothing can repair the blessings I have lost. [Translation.]

LETTER 791

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, October 11, 1688.

I have received your two letters from Joigny and Auxerre; the road to the former makes me shudder to behold it; for, my dearest Comtesse, I see you in my mind's eye wherever you go, and the melancholy that oppresses you weighs me down by sympathy. You would certainly have been much better situated here; you would sooner have received news from M. de St.-Pouanges, who has promised the Chevalier to take particular care of your son: you would have known that a certain little fort, which might have occasioned our friends some trouble, was taken before His Highness [1] arrived. Here too you would have learned, that, on account of this Prince going to the trenches, M. de Vauban has doubled all the precautions which he generally takes for the safety of the besiegers. You would have known, that it was not the regiment of Champagne, but of Picardy, which opened the trenches, at which, however, no one was wounded; and, in short, you would have seen that all the good women of this country, who have husbands, brothers, sons, cousins, or what you please, embarked in the same affair, eat, drink, laugh, sing, visit, chat, reason, and hope soon to behold again the objects of their affection. It is a real grief to me, that, instead of doing like the rest, you should hide yourself from all the world, and maintain a cruel tête-à-tête with a dragon, that preys on your very vitals, without a single object to amuse you, starting at your own imagination, and thinking of everything dreadful that can possibly happen; nothing can be so insupportable and distressing as such a situation. Let me entreat you, my dear child, if it

[1] The Dauphin, who was to make the siege of Philisbourg, with Maréchal de Duras as General under him, and the famous engineer M. de Vauban to conduct the operations of the siege.

be possible, to have pity on yourself; believe me, you are in greater danger than your son; pray follow the advice of M. de Grignan, M. de Carcassonne, and the Chevalier, who have all written to you upon the subject. I would not mention the letter your son wrote to you; it was impossible to read it without being pierced to the heart; but this is not a subject to be dwelt on.

Give yourself no uneasiness about what I have written to M. de La Garde; everything will go as you could wish; and it will only serve to increase the esteem he already has for you, when he perceives what a sacrifice you are willing to make in order to live upon good terms with your relations: so discharge this from the number of your griefs. Mademoiselle de Méri occupies your rooms; it is not, however, very agreeable to find the door always shut against one with a *headache,* or the *megrim.* Oh, how well did our lovely Comtesse fill every place! how did she enliven all around her! Corbinelli's philosophy is still in the room you are so well acquainted with; but we see it less than in the square [1]. All the world is taken up with the news; the good Abbé Bigorre is in the height of his triumph; he will be here in three or four days. I have already informed you that the Chevalier and I eat together, and that an unbounded freedom reigns everywhere; but the use we make of it is, to be almost always together. Our way of thinking is so very much alike, our interests and our feelings are in such exact unison, that it would be doing violence to ourselves to keep asunder.

Madame de Coulanges has lost her brother; it is said the cordelier killed him; but I insist upon it that it was death. Yesterday I saw my widows, who have such love and esteem for you that you may reckon them in the number of your real friends. Madame de La Fayette is always the same. Her son writes her word, that he was a long time with yours, but that they were obliged to part at Metz; and that is all.

How affectionately, how warmly, is your presence

[1] Place Royale.

regretted and desired in the little bed-room! the coffee takes its round there regularly every morning; and it has been always so much my fate to be the last, that I cannot even obtain the preference over the Chevalier; but you, my dearest child, are no longer there: that is the death-stroke to us all. Adieu, my lovely; there is no happiness for me without you.

LETTER 792

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, October 13, 1688.

We live in daily expectation of hearing from you; we follow you step by step: you should have written to us from Châlons; to-morrow you will be at Lyons; I tell you so, in case you should not know it. It is really a relief to me to write to you; for my letters to Brittany are so fatiguing, that I am glad to turn from them towards my dear child. There is great reason to believe that Philisbourg will not keep us much longer in our present state of suspense. You will see by the letter the Chevalier has sent you, that our little Marquis arrived there in perfect health, and without being the least fatigued; you will see what care will be taken of him, and you will find that His Highness has surrounded the place, without receiving any fire from the garrison: in short, that the trenches are so well disposed, that, in all probability, everything will succeed to our wishes.

You say justly, this is a strange October! I never passed such a one before. Our dear Marquis used never to run any risk in this month, but that of missing a partridge or a hare, and that always by accident: but now we scarcely live: I have not only my own uneasiness, but feel yours also in the most lively manner. I know that merciless imagination of yours; how you will support such long sufferings, heaven only can tell.

We are in hopes that the Prince of Orange has taken wrong measures, and that the King of England will give him a warm reception, and beat him handsomely. He has had a conference with his nobles; he has left those at liberty who are not inclined to serve him, and has strengthened the attachment of those who are faithful to him: he has published a general liberty of conscience, and has given the command of his troops to the Comte de Roye, who, being a zealous Protestant, is very agreeable to the English.—In short, my dear, what shall I say to you? You heed me not, I am well assured; your thoughts are wholly engrossed by your son, nor can I blame you; but we hope to give you, in a few days, the most perfect satisfaction by informing you of the reduction of Philisbourg, and the safety of the Marquis. In the meantime, let me entreat you, my beloved child, to take care of yourself, if such a thing be possible; do not waste your flesh in unavailing sorrow, nor destroy your eyes with continual weeping. Have courage, pluck up your spirits; I beg this of you a thousand and a thousand times.

LETTER 793

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, October 15, 1688.

It is now a week since we heard from you: you cannot imagine how tedious the time appears. I am just returned from a visit to Madame de La Fayette, who received a letter from her son on the eleventh: he informs her, that our child is very well. The Chevalier has told you all he knows; he is in despair at not being able to go to Fontainebleau: you would rather receive news from him, but we must submit to what God pleases. Madame de Lavardin has been under great concern about Jarzé, who, as he was passing through the trenches, had his hand taken off at the wrist, by a cannon-ball, which obliged him

to have his arm immediately amputated above the elbow; this is a melancholy circumstance for so young a man! Nothing, however, can exceed the precaution M. de Vauban has taken for the security of everyone: the Dauphin goes the first to the trenches, and the Duc and Prince de Conti are not wanting on their parts; but it is forbidden, under pain of imprisonment, that any of the volunteers should follow them, or quit the respective regiments to which they belong [1]. All will go well, my child; in the name of God, be careful of yourself, and take a dose or two of that patience we all live upon here; continual uneasiness is as prejudicial as it is useless.

The Chevalier and I took a walk to Vincennes yesterday; you will readily conceive the subject of our thoughts and conversation. I write this to you from his room; he is just going to send away his packet. Adieu, therefore, my beloved Comtesse; I cannot reconcile myself to be without you; and my affection for you is such, as I believe no one else can attain.

LETTER 794

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, October 18, 1688.

We received your letters from Châlons, my dear child, the very day after the complaints we made of having been a week without hearing from you. It was a long time, and the heart suffers by uncertainty; accordingly we enter into your feelings at not having any news from Philisbourg. Hitherto your son has continued well, and conducted himself admirably; he hears the cannon thundering round, and the balls flying about him, without the least emotion; he has mounted in the trenches, and sends his uncle an ac-

[1] The Marquis de Grignan was now making his first campaign in the quality of volunteer in the regiment of Champagne, of which his father, the Comte de Grignan, had been Colonel.

count of the siege, as if he were an old soldier; he is very much beloved, and has frequently the honour of dining at the Dauphin's table, who talks to him familiarly, and admits him to do many little offices about his person. M. de Beauvilliers caresses him like his own child, and St.-Pouanges—but you will find a full account of all these matters in the Chevalier's letters. I only mention these circumstances to give some degree of merit to my own, by entertaining you with the subject that must be nearest your heart. But to return to our journey.

What a vile road! Indeed, indeed, my good Comte, you ought to blush for what you have done. I well knew that the mountain of Rochepot was a precipice, concealed by a little good for nothing hedge, and the road covered with large loose flints; but at length this vile road is passed, and we will come back another way, if God pleases, as I earnestly hope he will. We fancy that you will embark on the Rhône to-day, after having called at Thézé [1]. We have horrible weather here! the poor Chevalier is still very much troubled with weakness in his legs, though he is free from pain; this gives him no small concern, and he stands in need of all his fortitude to bear with a condition so very inimical to what he calls his duty; he cannot get to Fontainebleau, where a thousand affairs call him. I am astonished that your health is proof against the continual uneasiness you endure. It is a miracle; endeavour to continue this, and do not exhaust yourself by either sleeping at night, or eating by day: but who can command the imagination? It grieves me to hear that you grow thin; I dread the air of Grignan for that reason, for I love everything in you, even your beauty, which is only the least object of my affection: you have a heart that cannot be too much admired, too much adored; have some compassion, however, upon your portrait, and do not let it look like that of another person; rest yourself at La Garde; for my part, I must speak my sentiments boldly, which

[1] An ancient château belonging to the family of Châteauneuf de Rochebonne.

are, that if the situation of Grignan should not agree with you, and the breaking of the rocks there should occasion as unhealthy an air, as digging up the ground at Maintenon [1] has done, this would be the resolution I would take, without giving myself the least concern, without scolding any one, and without complaining: I would very coolly desire M. de La Garde to let me stay at his house with Pauline, your women, and two footmen, till the place was decent and habitable. This is what I should do without hesitation; and it would save you a number of troublesome visits, as it would readily be supposed that a house that was repairing, was no place to receive company.

You desire I would inform you of the state of my health, and of the life I lead; in answer to which, I have to tell you, first, that I have found my blood a little heated, have had some bad nights, and have shed many tears; things which are not favourable to health, and for that reason I am uneasy about yours; however, by the help of a proper regimen, I am pretty well recovered. As to my way of life, you know it already: it is passed chiefly in the lower rooms, where I am fixed, as it were, by destiny; however, I strive neither to be troublesome nor disagreeable, and, if I am not mistaken, my presence is rather desired. We are continually talking of you, your son, and your affairs. I shall presently pay a visit to Madame de La Fayette and Madame de Lavardin, who both talk to me of you, and love and esteem you. The other day I was at Madame de Mouci's, yesterday at the Marquise d'Uxelles'. There is not a creature in Paris; in the evening, indeed, they just return in time to go to bed, and the next morning, as soon as they rise, away again to Fontainebleau; thus our lives pass quickly, because time does the same. Mademoiselle de Méri is very well pleased with us, and we with her. We have the Abbé Bigorre, who is indeed the most agreeable and least troublesome of all our guests. Corbinelli is in Normandy with the Lieutenant

[1] It is well known, that removing the earth in the camp de Maintenon occasioned many disorders.

of the Police, and will not return till next month. Did I tell you that the Chevalier and I went the other day to Vincennes? we had a long chat, and I walked a great deal, but all this was in a melancholy style, I need not tell you why.

The same day.

My letter was sealed when I received yours dated *from the boat below Maçon*; all the expressions of affection it contains enchant me; if I did not feel the excess of my love for you, I should be ashamed, and almost persuaded that you know more on that head than myself. You may be assured that I shall not quit Paris either while the fate of Philisbourg remains undetermined, or the Chevalier continues here; for these are things which naturally engross my attention. In the meantime be under no apprehension that I will suffer myself to be starved. We still continue to eat, though it is the bread of affliction. The thought of my dear child prevails with me everywhere. No person could profit more by living under the same roof with you, than I have done. How delightfully did our mornings pass! We used to be two hours together before others were awake. I cannot reproach myself with having lost either time or opportunity of being with you. I was too covetous of the pleasure; I never left you without an earnest desire to return, nor ever returned without feeling sensibly the pleasure of seeing you again, and passing the evening with you. May God forgive me this weakness! so much fervour was due to him alone. Your moral reflections are just and good.

Madame de Vins has been under some uneasiness about her husband; she has at length received a letter from him; he is safe at present, *for he is at the siege of Philisbourg*; he was obliged to pass through some dangerous woods, and his friends were a considerable time without hearing from him. If the air and noise of Grignan prove troublesome to you, go to La Garde; this is still my advice. A thousand kind remembrances to all your Grig-

nans, I am certain M. de La Garde will be one of the number. Pauline, my dear, how are you? She is a happy creature to see you, and be obliged to love you.

No one understands better than myself the attachment we have for inanimate, and consequently ungrateful, things; witness my folly on the subject of Livry; you have caught the infection from me.

LETTER 795

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, October 20, 1688.

We have received your packet from Thézé, of which you gave us a most agreeable description. I could not have expected to find so much politeness and good order on the top of a mountain; the lady of the mansion [1] always noble, lovely, and worthy of being beloved. You did well to answer for Corbinelli, that he cannot shake off his chains. I am afraid, with all this splendid outside, this poor woman is not truly happy; I pity her, and hate the cause of her troubles. But let me turn the conversation to you, my dear child.

Heaven be praised, you have passed the proud, restless, turbulent Rhône! If an alliance were to be made between it and the Durance, when the latter is in its airs, there would be curious work! We are impatient to have your letters from La Garde. Do your youth and health still hold out against your dragons, your anxious days and restless nights? It is the thought of these that alarms me, for I know nothing so fatal; and all this happens to you from having moved so far from the centre of news, and giving too great a rein to your imagination: were you with us, you would know, like us, what passes almost every day, and, like us, be satisfied that the little soldier is an adept

[1] Thérèse Adhémar de Monteil, Comtesse de Rochebonne, and sister of M. de Grignan.

in his new profession: he writes with great spirit and vivacity; he has twice mounted guard in the trenches; he has helped to carry the fascines, and he is in perfect health. The Chevalier is delighted with him, and wrote to him thus: "You are no longer a boy, you are no longer my nephew, you are my companion in arms." This will overpay the young hero for all he has done. The worst is now past, for it is supposed that the regiment of Champagne will not mount again in the trenches. What joy will you feel, my dear Comtesse, when I shall write you word, *Philisbourg is taken, and your son is safe*! then, if it please God, you will once more breathe freely, and so shall I, for it is not to be supposed that anyone can enjoy life tranquilly in your present situation. Our little Marquis directs all his letters, under cover, to me, apologizing for *the liberty*. In short, everything goes well; however, we wait to hear from you with all the anxiety that is occasioned by true regard. I embrace M. de Grignan and the prelates who are with you, and M. de La Garde, who is in one place, and Pauline who is in another; but what am I talking of? you are all together at your mansion. Well! and how do you find yourselves? how goes on the trowel? Methinks we hear Mansart [1] from hence calling out for the Coadjutor.

The Prince of Orange is on our coasts, his fleet all dismasted, and his fresh water all spoiled: a squadron, that he sent to tamper with the Commander of the English fleet, would have been severely handled, if they had dared to come within gun-shot; the wind dispersed six or seven of them, as they returned. The King [2] has conciliated the minds of all, by a little indulgence on a point of religion. God has hitherto protected him. Adieu, my dearly beloved child, I know not what to say to you on the score of my affection; I want words, or find them too weak, to express the full force of my sentiments.

[1] Master-builder and architect to the King.

[2] James II.

LETTER 796

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, October 22, 1688.

I begin with your dear son; nothing is so easy to divine as your sentiments, and do you think we have not the same? But we have a happiness, that it is not your fault you do not enjoy also, that of having fresh news every day, whereas you are forced to languish a whole week in expectation. We know that the Dauphin is often in the trenches, and that the other day he was quite covered with dust, raised by a cannon-ball that fell a few paces from him. You will judge, as we do, if these trenches are proper for a King's son; fascines are carried thither, but in the night only. The regiment of Champagne, however, will not be put to hard duty. By this packet you will receive a letter from M. du Plessis, that will show you how many excellent Governors your son has about him. We shall find him on his return quite another being. I build my hopes upon the Chevalier's opinion, who thinks the place cannot hold out much longer, and that, as Vauban is sure of being master of it, he will not hurry matters, but take even more care of the men than he is accustomed to do, and yet you know how cautious he is of hazarding their lives. The Dauphin is adored by the whole army; he is liberality itself; he provides for the wants of all the wounded: he has sent three hundred louis-d'ors to the Marquis de Nesle [1]; he furnishes those with baggage who have lost their own; he distributes gifts amongst the common men; he writes to the King in praise of all the officers, and recommends them to His Majesty's favour; he gives a great deal, because, to use his own words, he finds many objects: the King reads his letters in public; the Chevalier

[1] Louis de Mailly, Marquis de Nesle; he died some time after at Spire, of the wound he received at the siege of Philisbourg.

triumphs not a little on this occasion, and cries, "Well! is not this just what I told you? It is no more than I expected." In short, my child, our dear boy is fortunate in making his first campaign under such a Prince; and I am certain that, notwithstanding the uneasiness you may endure, you would not, upon any consideration, have him at home with you. The circumstance of finding himself in the midst of all the officers who served in his uncle's regiment, must be a great satisfaction to you. I could talk on this subject till to-morrow.

A word or two of your love for me. You make me blush by its excess; not that I can charge myself with being behindhand with you in this respect; but that I think no one has a title to your regard but your son, while the siege of Philisbourg lasts. Give up all thoughts of me, therefore, and cease to overwhelm me with your affection; for how shall I make a return, otherwise than by saying, "All that I have, I give unto you?" Pray write to your brother; he has done very well; I have his Power of Attorney: he would be much admired by us, if you did not spoil the trade; but your perfection effaces everything: there is no heart like yours; do not form yourself therefore by our model, but write to him prettily, after the conquest of Philisbourg, and in such a way as to show that you are satisfied with him, as I am and ought to be. The Chevalier and I are still firm friends, but do not let this awaken jealousy in you: we love each other in, through, and by you. I know not what you mean by your ill-humour; you have no humour that does not give us infinite pleasure, and we cannot sufficiently expatiate on the noble and just way of thinking with which heaven has blessed you; this furnishes us with an inexhaustible fund of conversation. He is still anxious to go to Fontainebleau, but his legs will not serve him; for myself, I am in good health; heaven preserve yours to you, my child, for, say what you will, I shall never think you perfectly well while the present cause of anxiety remains.

I fancy you found the poor Cardinal de Bouillon very

dejected [1], notwithstanding all the beauties of his retreat; it must have been a great pleasure to him to see you again. I return him a thousand thanks for his kind remembrance, and to-morrow I shall make all my widows happy with yours. We are going to bid adieu to Madame de Mouci, she is preparing for her usual journey; she desired me the other day to embrace you in her name. Madame de Lavardin will be rejoiced at the complaisance of Madame de Rochebonne; she had this affair greatly at heart, and indeed it was but reasonable to let her have the care of her little nephews, of whom she is so fond.

M. de La Garde has written to me like a man who has great esteem for you, and who is exactly of our way of thinking. You cannot take too much advantage of his talents and friendship. We live upon very good terms with Mademoiselle de Méri, as well as with the Abbé Bigorre, whose company we have not so often as we could wish. Corbinelli is still in Normandy with the Lieutenant of the Police.

Yesterday a stag killed the horse of one of the King's grooms, whose name I do not remember, and wounded the man himself dangerously; the grandson of St.-Hérem, as he was riding neck or nothing with the Comte de Toulouse, was thrown, and lay unconscious for three hours. He is now better.

LETTER 797

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, October 25, 1688.

The impatience we are in to hear from you, which makes us even send to meet the post-boy, and the joy we feel when we hear, that, notwithstanding your uneasiness, you still continue in good health, seem, in some measure, to entitle us to the kindness with which you furnish us with

[1] He was an exile. See note to Letter 737, of August 8th, 1685, in the fifth volume.

the information; and you may judge, by the need we have of such comfort, how much we consider ourselves obliged to you for your punctuality. I always say *we*, for the Chevalier's sentiments and mine are so much alike, that I know not how to separate them. But now a word of Philisbourg.

You will receive a letter from your son, of the eighteenth instant; he was then perfectly well, and you will find by what M. du Plessis says of him, that he is not likely to bring any disgrace upon his family: but admire with me the arrangements of Providence; the rain prevented his regiment from being present at the most glorious, and at the same time the hottest action that has taken place since the commencement of the siege; it was the attacking a horn-work, which our troops carried on the nineteenth, the day after he wrote his letter; the Marquis d'Harcourt, Maréchal de camp, the Comte de Guiche, and the youngest son of the Prince de Tingri, the Comte d'Estrées, and several others of our acquaintance, distinguished themselves greatly on this occasion. Courtin's son is mortally wounded; the Marquis d'Uxelles has received a slight hurt, and poor Bordage paid for all two days before. The King has given his regiment to the Duc du Maine, and has promised Bordage's son another, with a pension of a thousand crowns. The two Princes, and all the young volunteers, are in despair at not having been present at this fine entertainment; but it happened not to be their day. They were obliged, in a manner, to tie the Dauphin neck and heels, to prevent him from going into the trenches. Vauban took him round the waist, and forced him out of them, together with M. de Beauvilliers. In short, this Prince is the darling of the soldiers [1]; he begs regiments for some, and presents for others; he throws his money by handfuls amongst the wounded and the needy. It is thought the place cannot hold out long after the lodgment we have

[1] During this siege, they gave him the name of *Louis-le-Hardi*, or Louis the Bold. See La Fontaine's Ballad, vol. i. of his Miscellaneous works.

made. The Governor being confined to his bed by a fit of sickness, and the officer who commanded in his stead being taken prisoner, it is hoped and believed, that no other person will take upon himself to play so losing a game. The Chevalier makes me laugh by saying in a breath, that he is rejoiced that the Marquis was not present at the action, and in despair that he had not an opportunity of distinguishing himself; in short, he wishes that he were just as safe as himself, and yet, at the same time, that his reputation as a soldier were as well established as his; but we must have a little patience: let us hope, however, my child, that everything will succeed according to our wishes, and that you may again behold your son safe.

I find you were extremely well received at La Garde, and that at length, by mere dint of moving on, you have arrived at Grignan. You will inform us how you find yourself there, and how that poor substance, which thinks, and thinks so strongly, has been able to preserve its fair and delicate form in such excellent order, amidst such violent agitations. You have made one distinction more than your father Descartes ever did.

Death has been more busy here than even at the siege of Philisbourg. Poor La Chaise [1], who was so fond of you, who had so much learning, and who displayed it so well in his "Life of St.-Louis," died lately in the country of a fever. M. du Bois is sensibly affected at his death. Madame de Longueval, or the *chanoine* [2], is also dead of a quinsy; she entertained an irreconcileable hatred to our Montataire [3]. It gives me concern that any persons should carry such sentiments with them into the other world. You see how Death goes about picking up those whom God chooses to remove from hence.

[1] Jean Filleau de La Chaise, author of a "Life of St.-Louis," which was greatly esteemed. He was brother of M. de St. Martin, author of a translation of "Don Quixote."

[2] Madame de Longueval, chanoine of Remiremont, was known in the world under the title of the *canon*; she was sister of Maréchal d'Estrées.

[3] Marie de Rabutin, Marquise de Montataire, who had for a long time carried on an obstinate law-suit against Madame de Longueval.

Madame de Lavardin gave me a thousand compliments for you yesterday, as did Madame d'Uxelles, Madame de Mouci, and Mademoiselle de La Rochefoucauld, whom we have received into the number of our widowhood. I likewise include Madame de La Fayette; but as she was not at Madame de Mouci's yesterday, I mention her separately. Nothing can exceed the esteem all these good personages express for you. Adieu, amiable and beloved child: I often speak of you with pleasure, because it is almost always in your praise. We are divided between our attention to philosophy and to you, for these are the only two objects of our thoughts at present.

LETTER 798

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Tuesday, October 26, 1688.

Oh! what a letter, my child! it well deserves that I should come here on purpose to receive it, as I did. At length, then, you have arrived safely at Grignan, and are in perfect health; and such is my fate, that, though you are removed at the distance of half the globe from me, I must rejoice at it. Perhaps it may please heaven that ere long I shall embrace you again; let me live in that hope. You make a very pleasing portrait of Pauline. I know her again; she is not at all altered, as M. de Grignan would have made us believe she was. She is a sweet creature, and worthy of being loved. She adores you, and her absolute submission to your will, even in the midst of her joy at seeing you, if you decide that she should leave you again, at once engages my pity and concern; nor can I help admiring the power she has over herself. Were I in your place, I should be loath to part with such an agreeable companion, who will at once furnish you with amusement and occupation. I would make her work at her needle, and reads works of taste; I would argue with her,

and sound the depth of her capacity. I would talk to her with affection and confidence; for, believe me, you will never be tired of her society, on the contrary, she may be of great use to you. In short, I would make the most of her, and would not punish myself by depriving myself of such a comfort.

I am very glad the Chevalier speaks well of me; my vanity is concerned in preserving his good opinion: if he is fond of my company, I, in return, can never have too much of his, and I think it a proof of good taste, to be desirous of cultivating his esteem. I know not how you can say, that your humour is a cloud, which hides or obscures the affections you have for me. If such may have been the case formerly, you have for many years past totally removed the veil, and you no longer conceal from me any part of the most perfect and tender affection that one person can entertain for another. Heaven will reward you for it in your own children, who will love you, not in the same way, as perhaps they may not be capable of it, but at least to the utmost of their abilities, and we can desire no more.

You represent M. de Carcassonne's building as a body without a soul, wanting life, and all the nerves of war. I think the Coadjutor is not less wanting in this respect. My God! what are they about? but I will say no more. It would be well, however, if there were some end to all this, and that they would relieve you from the noise and confusion with which you are at present surrounded.

They say poor Jarzé is dead of his wounds. The siege of Philisbourg will soon be at an end, and you will then rejoice that your son was there; it is like the Candia [1] expedition. The Marquise d'Uxelles seems perfectly indifferent about the slight wound her son [2] has received;

[1] In the year 1669, M. de Sévigné went to serve at the siege of Candia, almost against the consent of his mother.

[2] Nicolas du Blé, Marquis d'Uxelles, afterwards Maréchal of France, in the year 1703.

M. d'Uxelles was one of the original characters of this period. With exemplary conduct, abandoning himself to none but the most

but they are neither friends nor relations; you and I are not happy, or unhappy, enough, to have the same feelings. The Marquise is very thoughtful of M. de La Garde [1], the good effects of which you will experience. She has a collection of letters that were written to the Venetian Ambassador, which are reckoned admirable of their kind.

We have had deplorable weather for some time past; but everyone is rejoiced at it, as it, in some degree, frustrates the designs of the Prince of Orange. I do not think the Chevalier will go to Fontainebleau eventually. I intend to take a trip to Brévanes, in order to stretch my legs a little; but this will not be till after Philisbourg is taken, which holds out longer than was expected, and gives me some little uneasiness. The Chevalier and I have taken another walk to Vincennes; it is a delightful retreat, for there is not a human being to be seen there.

Dispose of my friendship, my compliments, my love, my embraces, as you think proper, for I know not whom you have with you; but be sure not to forget my Pauline; prepare her to love me, and give her, upon reading this, a kiss from me. I am willing that she should be indebted to me for once for that pleasure. I cannot yet reconcile myself to the not seeing you below stairs as usual.

innocent pleasures, living away from the Court by inclination, and apparently very little solicitous to please, he knew how to acquire a large fortune, without being indebted for it to his merit, for he was a General of very slender reputation. In 1688, he received the blue ribbon: but instead of writing to thank the King for it, "he only thanked M. de Louvois, and desired the courier to tell him at the same time, that if this order would prevent him from going to the tavern and other such places, he would send it back to him again." This is what Madame de La Fayette relates of him, who besides speaks highly of him; whereas St. Simon blackens him a good deal. It is to M. d'Uxelles this saying is attributed: when he was asked why he did not marry, he replied, "Because I have never yet seen a man whose father I wished to be."

[1] It has been already observed, that Madame d'Uxelles had entered into a regular correspondence of news with M. de La Garde.

LETTER 799

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, October 29, 1688.

We are impatiently waiting for letters from you this evening, and in truth most of our time is taken up in writing to each other; Sunday alone is a day of respite. All our conversation turns upon you, and you can never receive truer praise than what is given you by all those who have had an opportunity of observing the many important things you have done for your family, but we are particularly charmed with the affair of the law-suit. I would go on, but the fear of wounding your modesty stops my pen, and I shall only say, as Voiture does to the Prince: "If you knew with how little respect or fear of offending you, we abandon the reins to our admiration, you would be obliged to confess, that we sin with our eyes open, and, consequently, that not one of your many amiable qualities is lost upon us." We earnestly hope that you will infuse some portion of them into your daughter; you can do nothing more advantageous for her; tell her then, what it is proper for her to do, as I have often heard you tell your son; there is no doubt that she will quickly profit by your advice; by the answers she makes, she appears to have no common share of wit and vivacity, which, added to the earnest desire she shows of pleasing you, makes her a pretty mass of wax, capable of receiving any impression you shall please to stamp upon it. This cannot fail of affording you great amusement, and is an occupation truly worthy of you, both in the eyes of God and man.

It is our opinion, that if M. de Grignan is to make any stay at Avignon, it would not be amiss for you to accompany him thither, in order to avoid the trouble and expense of double visits; but we are sensible how random all advice at such a distance must necessarily be, and are sure

that you will take such measures as are most proper. The Chevalier is unable to use his right hand, he will not be able to write for a long time; I have offered myself to be his secretary.

I have sent you letters from your son of the twenty-second of this month; you will find great comfort in the care that is taken to preserve a life so precious to you; you will also see how these two volunteers suffered for their vapouring: fair and softly goes far. Write a line or two to M. Courtin; he has lost his son, who was killed by one of our own party in the night, mistaking him for an enemy.

Adieu, my ever dear, and ever lovely; I was yesterday at Madame de La Fayette's, where the Princess came in just as we were talking of a compliment paid by one of the courtiers to the King, who said, "Your Majesty kills wolves like His Highness, and His Highness takes towns like your Majesty." If this same Philisbourg was but off our hands, we could tell you a thousand droll stories. I embrace all the Grignans. I think Pauline is greatly advanced, to read the *Metamorphoses*; she will now be fairly rid of *la Guide des Pécheurs* (The Sinner's Guide); take my advice then, my dear, and boldly put into her hands the *Moral Essays*.

LETTER 800

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, November 1, (All-Saints' day), 1688.

It is so long since I passed this holiday here, that I am quite astonished at it. We shall this evening have a concert of bells, which will highly delight Corbinelli, and which I shall bear with, because I have not my usual gaiety. We are so intent upon the reduction of Philisbourg, that I would not absent myself from the centre of news; and I am not a little mortified, my dear child, when I reflect how much you are left to the mercy of your imagination, which is the most tormenting company you can pos-

sibly have. M. de Vauban has written to desire His Majesty to think of some person for Governor of this important conquest. We are in hopes that the place will be ours to-day [1], as well for the pleasure of the surprise, as to do honour to the nativity of the Dauphin [2]. Enclosed are letters from your son, who has just quitted the trenches. MONSEIGNEUR is there every day: the Marquis is in good spirits; he has written very prettily to *Martillac*; I wish she was with you.

I am very uneasy about the Chevalier; the gout teases him sometimes in one hand, sometimes in the other; and he has other frequent pains by day, and sleepless nights. I do all in my power to comfort him, but my cares fall very short of those he has been accustomed to receive from you. We eat together in the same little room; it seems a cell destined for my residence. Coffee is quite in disgrace; the Chevalier thinks it heats him, and puts his blood in a ferment; and I, who, you know, always follow the lead, have likewise rejected it; rice-gruel supplies its place, and I keep coffee for the winter.

You do not say a word to me of your own health; I am terribly afraid of your nights, and the surprise of the air of Grignan. How uncivil has this north-east wind, which made you swallow so much powder, been to you! this is not the way in which you ought to have been received by it: in short, I tremble for your health; mine is perfectly restored. I sleep much better than I did; I have no longer so bad a tongue, and am in all respects like other people. There are certain times and seasons, days and nights, that cannot easily be got over: but, after all, though I cannot absolutely be comforted, nor recover what I have lost, I come round again by the help of a good constitution; this is exactly the case with me at present, as much so as if I were young. I have a glimmering prospect of coming to see you, and that is my support.

[1] Philisbourg capitulated October 29, and the garrison evacuated it November 1.

[2] Born November 1, 1661.

I fancy the proroguing of the Assembly of your States has quite disconcerted your measures; if so, you will be, as I wished, out of the air of Grignan. You know I proposed your going to La Garde, to avoid that building mania, which made everybody ill at Maintenon. I imagine the Coadjutor's building will go on pretty well, but that of Carcassonne will plague you all the summer. This is an unfortunate circumstance.

The Abbé Bigorre is, truly speaking, the best friend, and the most agreeable tenant, that can be wished; the Chevalier is highly satisfied with him. Mademoiselle de Méri meets with some company here, but her rooms cause us many a heartache [1]. What do you do with Pauline? How is it you do not take her with you? I have given a description of her to Madame de La Fayette, who thinks it impossible for you not to love her. She advises you to watch her turn of mind, and to manage it by your own excellent judgment. She greatly approves of your holding frequent conversations with her, of letting her read to you, walk with you, listen to you, and of furnishing her with every opportunity of exercising her mind and her memory.

Madame de Lavardin is extremely happy that poor Jarzé is out of danger; his mother and wife are here, and think it some comfort, under their misfortune, that he will now, at least, live with them quietly at home, or with his friends in Provence, or at Paris. I think we shall undertake no siege after that of Philisbourg; I am of your opinion, that it is doing quite enough before seventeen years of age [2]. Sanzei is with the army as well as the rest. Adieu, my dearest! Do not believe that we can ever cease to regret you, or reconcile ourselves to the want of your enlivening presence in this mansion.

[1] Mademoiselle de Méri occupied the rooms which had been the Comtesse de Grignan's.

[2] The Marquis de Grignan was born in November 1671.

*LETTER 801

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, All-Saints' day, 1688.
Nine o'clock at night.

Philisbourg is taken, and your son is well! I have only to turn this phrase in every possible way, for I will not change my text. Learn then again from this note, that *your son is well, and that Philisbourg is taken*! A courier has just arrived at M. de Villacerf's, who says that the Dauphin's courier reached Fontainebleau while Father Gaillard was preaching; and that the sermon was immediately interrupted, and thanks returned to God for this brilliant achievement. No further particulars are known, except that there was no assault, and that M. du Plessis was right when he said, the Governor had ordered waggons to carry away his equipage. Recover your breath, then, my dear child, and let the first thing you do, be to return thanks to God: no other siege is talked of; rejoice that your son has witnessed that of Philisbourg; it is an admirable period for him: it is the Dauphin's first campaign. Would you not have been grieved, if he had been the only person of his age who was not present on this occasion, in which all the rest glory? But let us not look back; everything has happened as we could have wished. It is you, my dear Comte, we may thank for it: I congratulate you on the joy you must experience, and beg my compliments also to the Coadjutor: you are all relieved from great anxiety. Sleep soundly then, my beautiful love, sleep soundly, on the assurance we give you; if you are covetous of grief, as we formerly said, seek some other occasion, for God has preserved your dear child to you: we are in raptures, and in this feeling I embrace you with an affection that I believe you cannot doubt.

*LETTER 802

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, November 3, 1688.

Your heart must be now at ease; you will receive no letters that do not contain assurance of the health of your dear child. Yield a little to the delight of being no longer subject to the agonies arising from the just apprehension of a danger that is past; think of the pleasure your son will receive in his attendance at Court, and in having been present at the first occasion on which the Dauphin performed the part of conqueror; you see more clearly than I do all the advantages of this era. It is to be hoped that the Chevalier will be able to go to Court: the ill state of his health is one of your misfortunes. This pain, which runs about him like a mouse, first to one hand, then to the other, is to-day settled in his knee, and has prevented him from dining at Dangeau's, as he intended yesterday: this is mortifying; but as the pain is not violent, if he can at last reach Versailles, it is from him, my dear child, you will receive real service, supported by the Marquis, who is a little man of consequence, and has done his duty as well as any one in this campaign. He is cool, courageous, and persevering; he amused himself the other day with pointing two field-pieces, as if he had only been firing at a target at Livry.

Speaking of Livry, I must not omit to tell you, that you may see there are wounded everywhere, that as M. de Méli was shooting a few days ago in our forest, as he has been accustomed to do, his gun burst in his hand, and shattered it in so dreadful a manner, that it has been necessary to amputate the arm close to the elbow, like poor Jarzé's. He is hard by at Madame Sanguin's: I thought it due to Livry, not to omit this story. The one I have to relate of Father Gaillard is more entertaining: He was

preaching on All-Saints' day: M. de Louvois brought word that Philisbourg was taken: the King made a sign; Father Gaillard was silent; when His Majesty, proclaiming the news aloud, fell upon his knees to return thanks to God; the preacher then resumed his discourse, and by happily introducing Philisbourg, the Dauphin, the King's good fortune, and the grace of God displayed in his person and in all his undertakings, composed so excellent a dish, that he brought the whole audience to tears: the King and the Court admired and praised it highly; he received a thousand compliments; in short, the humility of a Jesuit must have been fully satisfied.

I am very much pleased with M. de Vendôme's reply for M. d'Aix [1]: "Since the Governor wishes it, his deputy must wish it too." Madame de La Fayette told me again the day before yesterday, that she was delighted with the noble and disinterested manner in which M. de Grignan discussed this subject at her house. You see he took the right side, and that he even left the business to M. d'Aix to unravel for himself: this dexterity precludes the possibility of his having a shadow of dissatisfaction. You will tell me a little of the news of your Assembly.

Your Suzes will soon see me here; they are as much pleased with Madame de Lavardin as you are. The Comte de Gramont interests himself for M. de Gordes with all his might and main; M. de Langres [2] acts his part well in this affair; he has given up his nephew to them: "Take him, Sir, here he is; make him wise enough to understand how fortunate he will be in marrying your daughter: I wish nothing better, I love my name and my family; do what you can." Upon this, the Comte and his lady go to the lad, who is at Chaillot, in a small house belonging to M. de Vivonne: they converse with him, but he possesses two things in a sovereign degree, distrust and indecision; he accordingly wanders from the point every moment:

[1] Daniel de Cosnac, Archbishop of Aix, formerly Bishop of Valence.

[2] Louis M. de Simiane de Gordes, Bishop of Langres.

notwithstanding this, they persevere in their project; but they will not see the end of it, till they can find out a way to bind the wind, and fix the quicksilver. It is not so difficult to stop poor Madame de S****. How I pity her; to be, at her age, and with ten children, still tormented with turbulent passions! it is her destiny. Adieu, my best beloved; this is a long conversation, for so our letters may be called: if it tires you I shall be sorry, for I have written it with good will and *currente calamo.*

*LETTER 803

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, November 3, 1688.

I have been so occupied, my dear cousin, with the siege of Philisbourg, that in reality, I have not had a moment's time to write to you. Everything was at such a stand with me, that I was like those whose application almost deprives them of the power of breathing. Thank God, the deed is done: I sigh like M. de La Souche, I breathe freely. And do you know why I was so interested? because the little Marquis de Grignan was there. Think what it must be to have a child of seventeen years of age at such a place, a child that has scarcely left the wing of his mother, who still trembled with apprehension, lest he should catch cold. She was suddenly compelled to part with him, to send him to Philisbourg, and, with unheard of cruelty to herself, was obliged to set out for Provence with her husband, and thus to remove from the theatre of news, to which we cannot be too near; and, in short, for a whole fortnight she was obliged to turn her back, and not take a single step that did not remove her still farther from her son, and the means of hearing from him. I shudder myself while I write this to you, and I am sure, that, loving the Comtesse as you love her (for you well know that you do love her), you will feel for her situa-

tion. God, it is true, comforts her under her affliction, by the happiness of knowing at present that her son is in good health. She will be six days longer in suspense than we are: such are the evils of distance. This good place at length is taken. The Dauphin has performed miracles of firmness, ability, generosity, and humanity; scattering money with judgment, speaking highly of the services of his soldiers, rendering a thousand kind offices, asking rewards, and writing letters to the King, which have been the admiration of the whole Court. This has been a noble campaign; the whole Palatinate, and almost all the Rhine, is our own: these are good winter-quarters: with these we can wait quietly for the resolutions of the Emperor, and the Prince of Orange. The latter is supposed to be embarked: but the wind is so good a Catholic, that he has not yet been able to sail. It is said M. de Schomberg is with him. This is a great misfortune for the Maréchal and for us. The affairs of Rome are still in a bad train.

*LETTER 804

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, November 5, 1688.

I took medicine yesterday after the manner of my Capuchins, to purify my health, or cleanse it from alloy, and I am now perfectly well. I was grieved not to see you take possession of my room, as usual, early in the morning, asking me a thousand questions, cross examining me, and managing and assisting upon the slightest appearance of indisposition. Oh, my dear child, how sweet, how gratifying, are these attentions! how deeply have I sighed at being deprived of such convincing proofs of your affection! and the coffee you drank with me; and your toilet which used to be brought; and your morning visitors, who sought out and followed you, and against whom my cur-

tain served me for a barricado! To lose you, my child, is a loss indeed; no one ever threw such charms into affection as you do; I still tell you, you spoil the trade; everything is flat, everything insipid, that comes after you. It was thus M. de La Garde formerly spoke of you, and I believed that, on some occasions, you had cruelly concealed these treasures from me: but you have displayed them without reserve: I know the excellence of your heart, which is full of tenderness for me: this is a happiness with which you mean to comfort the last days of my existence, and which is only crossed by your absence: but absence will have an end, and your affection will last for ever.

The Chevalier has been to see me; he went away with the pain we spoke of the other day in his foot: it is a great mortification to him, and a great misfortune for you: of what service might he not be to you at Versailles, both with regard to your son, and your own affairs! We must not, however, dwell upon this: it is the will of God: but for that thought, what could we do? Mademoiselle de Méri would needs nurse me the other day, but was so indisposed, that she was obliged to fly from her charge. In this way our poor house is sometimes converted into a hospital. In reality, the Abbé Bigorre is the comfort of all the different rooms: I was willing to tell you all this while expecting your letters.

Five o'clock in the evening.

The weather is tremendous. Your letters have not arrived. I am in the Chevalier's room; I, poor I, am nursing him; he is in bed; he will write to you, however, for his pain is now in the knee: he flatters himself that he will soon get rid of it. We talked just now of your son; we shall expect him here. It does not appear to us necessary that the Marquis should go to Provence: it would be a useless expense: it is better that he should make the most this winter of his glorious campaign. We think also that M. du Plessis, with a thousand good qualities, will be a dead weight upon your purse, and of no use to the Mar-

quis; for a preceptor is scarcely wanted at Court, and still less with the army. To-morrow, my dear child, your heart will expand with joy; for you will learn officially that *Philisbourg is taken, and that your son is well.* It is not doubted here that Manheim will surrender without a word. Sleep in comfort then, and begin to put all your good resolutions in practice without delay.

It is said that the Prince of Orange has embarked, and that firing has been heard; but the same thing has been said so often, that I do not answer for its truth. Adieu, my dear, my beloved child; the more we see of the sentiments of others, the more we are charmed with yours: I do not allude to Brittany; I am perfectly satisfied there: but I will some day relate to you a little piece of ingratitude, which I have mentioned to the Chevalier, and of which, having unburdened my heart, I shall think no more. Madame de Castries has just left me, she sends you a thousand congratulations on the happy termination of the affair at Philisbourg.

*LETTER 805

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, November 8, 1688.

This is the day, my dear child, on which you are to begin your journey; we follow you step by step. The weather is delightful; the Durance will not be so terrific as it sometimes is. It looks as if you were resolved to remove farther and farther from us out of mere spite: you will find yourself at last on the sea-shore. But it is the will of God, that we should meet with periods in our life, which are difficult to bear; and we must endeavour to repair, by a submission to his will, the too great sensibility we feel towards earthly things. In this respect, it is impossible to be more culpable than I am.

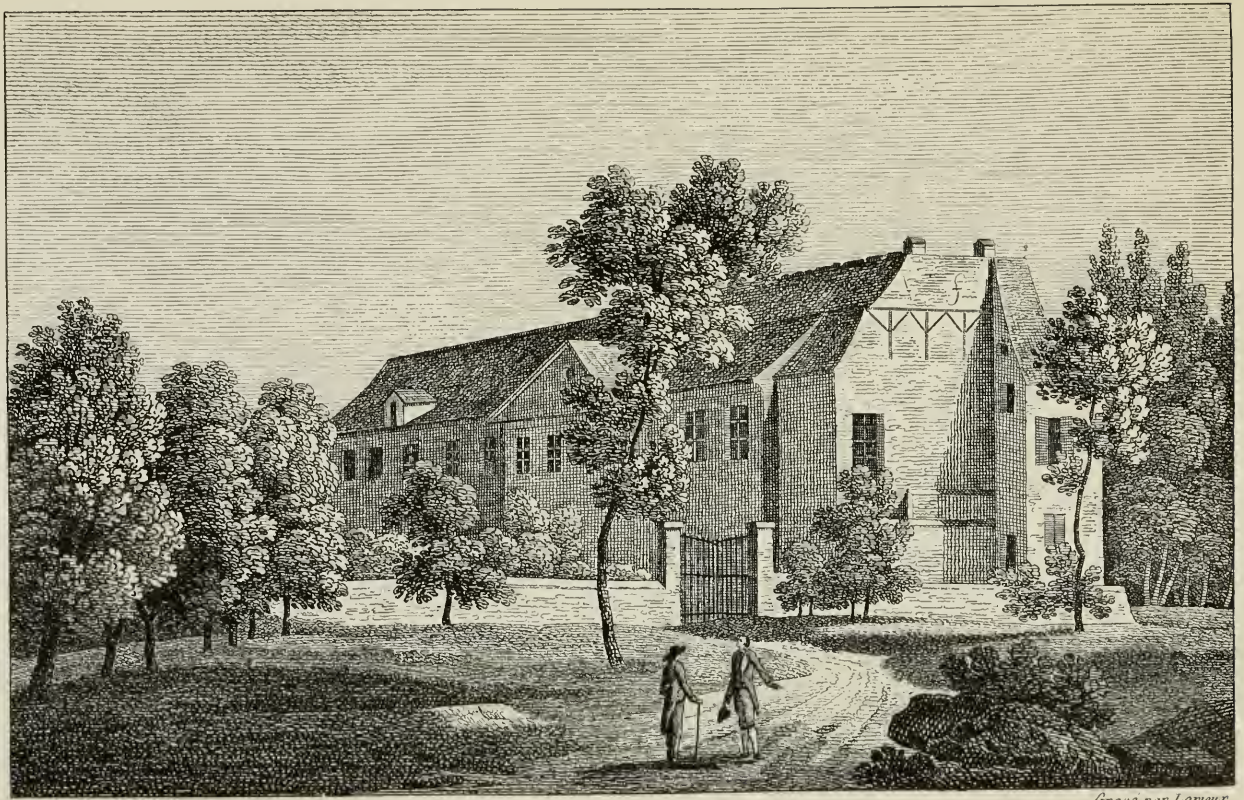
The Chevalier is much better. It is painful to reflect

that the weather which agrees with him, is precisely what may dethrone the King of England; whereas he suffered dreadfully a few days ago, when the wind and tempests were dispersing the fleet of the Prince of Orange: he is unhappy at not being able to make his health accord with the good of Europe; for the sentiment of joy is universal at the failure of the Prince, whose wife [1] is a perfect Tullia: ah, how boldly would she drive over the body of her father! She has empowered her husband to take possession of the kingdom of England, of which she calls herself the heiress; and if her husband is killed, for her imagination is not very delicate, M. de Schomberg [2] is to take possession of it for herself. What say you to a hero, who so sadly disgraces the close of a glorious life? He saw the Admiral's ship sink in which he was to have embarked; and as the Prince and he were the last in following the fleet, which was under weigh in the finest weather possible, they were obliged, by a tremendous storm that suddenly arose, to return to port, the Prince being very much indisposed with his asthma, and M. de Schomberg as much vexed. Only twenty-six sail returned with them: the rest were all dispersed, some towards Norway, others towards Boulogne. M. d'Aumont has sent a courier to the King, to inform him that vessels had been seen at the mercy of the winds, and that there were many appearances of shipwreck. A vessel armed *en flute*, in which were nine hundred men, sank in sight of the Prince of Orange. In short,

[1] Mary Stuart, daughter of James II., King of England, and wife of William-Henry of Nassau, Prince of Orange, afterwards King of England by the name of William III. Tullia, the daughter of Servius Tullus, Emperor of Rome, caused her chariot to drive over the bleeding body of her father, who had just been assassinated.

[2] Frédéric-Armand, Comte de Schomberg, Maréchal of France, obtained permission to retire from the King's service in 1685, on account of his having embraced the Protestant religion. He was Minister of State, and Generalissimo of the armies, of the Elector of Brandebourg, and went over to England in 1688 with the Prince of Orange.

Maréchal de Schomberg had ancient leagues with the Princes of Orange. He had, besides, much cause to complain of the Court, and even of Turenne, during the war with Holland. See a curious account of this General in the *Fragments Historiques de Racine.*



Tiré du Cabinet de M.r C.F.A. de Mussey *Gravé par Lorieux*

THE ABBEY AT LIVRY, NEAR PARIS.

the hand of God is visible upon this fleet: many ships may return, but it will be long before they will be able to do any mischief, for the dispersion has certainly been great, and has happened at a time when it was least expected: this is certainly a stroke of Providence. I need not say so much to you of this great news, for the papers are full of it; but as we are so too, and as we can talk of nothing else, it flows naturally from my pen.

Shall I give you another instance of wounds that were not received at the siege of Philisbourg? It relates to the Chevalier de Longueville: the town was taken: the Dauphin had just inspected the garrison, the little Chevalier mounted the back of the trenches to look at something, when a soldier, aiming at a woodcock, shot this poor child, and he died in consequence the next day: his death is as singular as his birth [1]. Méli, whom I mentioned to you, whose arm was obliged to be amputated, is since dead at Madame Sanguin's. This is news for the Marquis, notwithstanding the little interest he now takes in our poor Livry. Your remembrance of it is flattering to the attachment I have had for this delightful spot, and my regret at losing it. M. de La Bazinière is dead of a mortification in his leg, but he died like a Mars: he has soon followed his daughter [2], of whom he still complained even after her death.

I wish very much to know how you feel at being again away from me. You cannot regret Grignan in the state in which you left it. I can easily believe that the Chevalier is anxious to finish his building, and that M. de Carcassonne will be a long, long time, in completing his: you bear all this with wonderful patience; I could talk upon the subject for a year. I have written to M. de La Garde, to thank him from my heart for the affectionate and faithful friendship he bears you; there is no fear of his constancy: it is not so easy to be quit of you and Pauline, for

[1] Charles-Louis d'Orléans, natural son of Charles-Paris d'Orléans, Duc de Longueville, killed in crossing the Rhine in 1672.

[2] Wife of Jean Jacques de Mesmes, President à mortier in the Parliament of Paris.

whom he seems to entertain also a real affection. Be not uneasy respecting my health, it is excellent; pity me only for having lost my dear child, whose society afforded me pleasure and occupation, and without whom my life is a vacuum. Present my compliments to M. d'Aix, merely to see whether he will remember me. I suppose, as M. de Vendôme has determined the business, there can be no dispute; you must live in peace, and enjoy his excellent and animated conversation [1]: a different line of conduct would only afford amusement to your Provençaux, and would do you no service either in the country or at Court. Madame de La Fayette thinks M. de Grignan acted very wisely in treating this affair with the noble indifference he displayed at her house, by which he has lost nothing. She entreats him and M. d'Aix, and you too, my beauty, to live in that country, like persons belonging to the Court, who have met, and may meet again, at Versailles. A thousand remembrances to the dear Comte, and our Coadjutor; and if you will embrace Pauline for me, you will give her great pleasure; for I am sure she adores you: that is the way in which you are loved by everybody.

*LETTER 806

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, November 10, 1688.

The affectionate remembrance you retain for our little Abbey goes straight to my heart: it seems to me as if your attachment to that place were a branch of your love

[1] The following is a portrait of this Bishop, by the Abbé Choisy: "He is a man of singular vivacity; his eloquence is such, that it does not permit the truth of what he says to be doubted, though he says so much that all cannot be true. His conversation is fascinating, and of a loquacity that is very amusing to those who observe only, and have no business to transact with him. He came to Grenoble one day to see Madame de La Baume; speaking of herself, she said to him, "That when a woman is drawing towards her fiftieth year, she ought to think of nothing but her health." "Say, Madame," continued M. de Valence, "when she has passed it."

for me. The Chevalier affronted us highly the last time we were there: in spite of all he had written, signed, and sealed, upon the beauty of the place, there was only the show of courtesy between them; for in reality he did not like it; and the evening dews on their side did not pay much respect to him; so that we had always this subject of complaint: but alas! my beloved, this is but too certainly at an end for our happiness.

I think the Chevalier's health will permit him to go to Versailles: it will be a great thing for you and for your son, who will soon return there. Sleep soundly then, my child, and agitate yourself no longer: everything has turned out well, both with regard to the safety and the rising reputation of the Marquis. The Chevalier has told you all the fine things M. de Montégut says of him. This is precisely what you wished: before the age of seventeen he is an old soldier, a volunteer who has witnessed a glorious siege, and a Captain of Light-Horse: but it is odd that it should be you who raised this corps; without you it would have been nothing: your talents are great in every way; you do not confine them to the knowledge how to conduct a law-suit.

Poor St.-Aubin is wasting away so rapidly, that his end draws near. I spent part of yesterday with him, accompanied by Mademoiselle de Grignan; and I am going after dinner to Brévanes, to pay my respects to St.-Martin: nothing can exceed the beauty of the weather: Madame de Coulanges has been wishing for me these six weeks, but I had Philisbourg to take; I shall now be there for a few days, and shall receive your letters and write to you there. I shall walk a little; by exercise I shall give rest to my body and mind, which have suffered much, both on your account and your son's. I am perfectly well; I have taken medicine, and followed your wishes in every respect; I wish I could be certain you were in as good health as I am, and that the air of Provence did not disagree with you. Tell me truly how you are, and whether so much anxiety, and so many sleepless nights, have not

made you thin again. Madame de La Fayette desires you to love Pauline; she sees plainly, she says, that this child is handsome, and wishes, with Madame de Lavardin, that you may not refuse a good offer: they both embrace you. The Marquis de Jarzé is well: I condemn him to leave the army and live quietly at home: what can a man do who has only his left hand, with which he holds the bridle of his horse, and nothing on the other side to defend himself with? I shall not answer all you say on the subject of writing; can you suppose I take less pleasure than you do in our conversations? it relieves me from the fatigue of other letters when I write to you. I entreat M. de Grignan to be always as wise as he is at present, and the Coadjutor to finish his building: he told me, when he was here, that nothing had so good an appearance for his family, as to be building during a law-suit: I did not agree to this, but the disgrace of leaving it unfinished would have a bad appearance indeed.

*LETTER 807

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Brévanes [1], Friday evening, November 11, 1688.

I arrived here, my beautiful love, last evening: an excellent season, you will say, for visiting the country! but it is better to take advantage of this short moment, in which I have the pleasure of exercise, after being shut up for a year, than to lose it entirely. I do not repent having stayed so long in Paris, because I had to take Philisbourg, and to save our child from the dangers of the siege, which was business sufficient. As I have now nothing to do but to show my gratitude to heaven for the Marquis's safety, and the restoration of your peace of mind, I am come to this delightful country to offer up my thanksgivings, and

[1] A beautiful country-house belonging to the Duc de Chaulnes, four leagues from Paris.

I shall spend some days here. I believe I drew on the Chevalier ill luck, by my assiduity in wishing him good health; for the moment my back was turned, he was able to dine at the Abbé Têtu's; this has given me real pleasure: I know how much he wishes to go to Versailles, and this is the way thither. Madame de Coulanges is still more pleasing here than at Paris; she truly enjoys the country: I know not where she acquired this taste, which appears natural to her. *Fais ce que tu voudras* (do as you please), is the motto here; and it so happens, that we please to walk a great deal, for the weather is very fine: we read, remain alone, say our prayers, meet again, and live sumptuously; I have only been here four-and-twenty hours, but I can judge by the sample I have seen.

I expect a letter from you to-morrow: not the one I am most anxious to receive, which is an answer to that respecting the conquest of Philisbourg; I long to see your heart dilated with joy, and in a state of tranquillity to which it has been a stranger for these two months. You are now at Lambesc, my beloved Comtesse. How does this additional distance renew the pangs of separation! If you had been placed an hour ago, by enchantment, behind the palisades here, your modesty would have been very much embarrassed by all Madame de Coulanges and I said of you, which I cannot repeat. Adieu, my amiable and best beloved: it is a sad thing to be at such a distance from a dear child. I am going to purchase the *Règles de la Vie Chrétienne*, by M. Le Tourneux [1]: this book makes a great noise: I shall perhaps find in it the means of being more submissive to the decrees of Providence.

Madame DE COULANGES *also writes to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *Letter.*)

Madame de Sévigné is no better than a step-mother, Madame: she has not been to Philisbourg with your son,

[1] "Rules for a Christian Life," a posthumous work of M. Le Tourneux, which appeared in 1688, and has since passed through several editions.

having contented herself with taking up her abode at the post-office, that she might be ready on the arrival of the couriers. I am delighted at the true distinction that has been paid to the pretty *babe in swaddling-clothes* [1], whom I saw at Grignan: he is wonderfully well, and I have received pleasure from the circumstance, which must not be placed wholly to your account, for I love and esteem good and solid qualities. M. de Montgivraut has informed me, that he found you as beautiful as the day; I am afraid you will not be so sensible to the praise of yourself as to the praise of your son: it is sometimes very pleasant to be a mother, and especially at the end of a siege. Do not forget, my dear Madame, that I respect you highly.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *adds still a few more lines to her Daughter.*

This pretty woman can neither be silent on the subject of *the babe in swaddling-clothes*, nor of his mother: but it is the fashion to praise you. Adieu, my beloved.

Madame DE COULANGES *also writes a few lines to the Comte* DE GRIGNAN.
(*Also enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter.*)

Did you not also take some interest, Sir, in the Marquis de Grignan? In this case, permit me to tell you how sincerely I rejoice at his good fortune and his renown: it would be impossible to rejoice for the one without the other.

[1] Madame de Coulanges, who had only seen the Marquis de Grignan when an infant, still called him, "the babe in swaddling-clothes."

*LETTER 808

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, November 14, 1688.

I so well knew how much you were occupied at Philisbourg, Madame, that I have not written to you since the opening of the trenches. I enter easily into your fears for this monkey de Grignan, and your grief at the absence of his mother. M. d'Autun told me, that you wrote to him a few days ago, and that he did not find in your letter the gaiety, which renders your letters, in general, so entertaining. I replied, that your anxiety for the little de Grignan, and your grief at the departure of the beautiful Comtesse, left you nothing of yourself but your good sense, a good sense without grace or ornament, but which resembled a sick beauty, in whom we still recognise handsome features. I have entered into all the sorrows and uneasiness of the lovely Provençale on your account, and that of her son; but she is, at length, delivered from a part of her evils; and with a little patience, she will be quit of the rest.

*LETTER 809

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Brévanes, Monday, November 15, 1688.

I begin this letter at Brévanes, and shall finish it at Paris, where I am going to dine with Madame de Coulanges. She is going there to see Madame de Bagnols; and I, my beloved, to visit poor St.-Aubin, who is so reduced, that he cannot recover. We shall return again in the evening, and shall stay three or four days longer; which may be called finishing the business handsomely with the first President of the *Cour des Aides* (Le Camus), who has a beautiful house just by, as we formerly did at

Livry. I shall see the Chevalier de Grignan, and learn all particulars respecting you; he will give me your letters,—we had none on Thursday; and, after hearing how he is, I shall go back and finish my country excursion. I calculate that you have been at Lambesc [1] since Thursday, St. Martin's day: Friday M. de Grignan will have made his speech, pray let me have it; and M. d'Aix [2] will have taken his chair of State. I am always with you, let me be where I may; but as I am not a philosopher, like Descartes, I cannot but feel that all this is in idea, and that you are really absent: are you not of the same opinion, though a disciple of this great man?

Paris, five o'clock in the evening.

I am not returned to Brévanes with Madame de Coulanges, my dear Comtesse; I found my poor St.-Aubin too near the great journey into eternity; and I have therefore put a stop to mine, to attend to what I owe to a person whom I have always loved. He was affected at seeing me, at least as much so as it is possible to be at the Faubourg St.-Jacques [3]; he held my hand a long time, and said a great many devout and affectionate things to me, which made my eyes overflow with tears. The opportunity should not be neglected of seeing a man die in peace and Christian-like composure, with a perfect indifference to the world, charity towards man, an earnest desire to be in heaven united for ever to God, and a pious dread of judgment, with a confidence founded on the infinite merits of Jesus Christ: all this is divine. It is of such persons we

[1] On account of the Assembly of the States which was held there.

[2] The Archbishops of Aix are, by birth, the first attorneys of Provence, and in this capacity they presided at the Assembly of the States, unless the Archbishop of Aix should be at the same time a Cardinal, which was the case with M. de Grimaldi, before M. de Cosnac. It is easily understood that this was for the sake of form; and that it was for this reason, M. de Marseilles and the Coadjutor presided alternately at this Assembly.

[3] A place where devotion was carried to such an extreme, that it was supposed incompatible with the love of God to retain any affection for his creatures.

should learn to die, particularly when we have not been happy enough to wish to live.

I am returned home, and have made my excuses to Madame de Coulanges, who accepted them very unwillingly. The Chevalier set out yesterday for Versailles: he sent me two of your letters this morning to Brévanes: I am certain there must be one in which you speak of your joy at the taking of Philisbourg: but be equally delighted, my dear, at the taking of Manheim, since our child ran a greater risk there than at Philisbourg, and be glad that he has only received a slight contusion on the thigh, after which he wrote me the letter I enclose you, by which you will see that he is fortunate in having escaped so well. The Dauphin has mentioned this contusion to the King, and Dangeau has written word of it to the Chevalier, congratulating him upon the event. The Chevalier immediately set off to Versailles: I am convinced he will return this evening to write to you, and inform you how he has made his court; but if he should not return this evening, be not uneasy respecting your child, for you see that he is well, and has been very fortunate. You must place this contusion in the list of all the other lucky incidents that have happened to him before he completed his seventeenth year, for after to-morrow it will be too late. Thank God, my dear child, and you also, my dear Comte, upon the assurance I give you: you both have reason to do so. Madame de Montchevreuil, who has lost her son[1], and Madame de Nesle, who will lose her husband, must envy you. The Abbé Bigorre has this moment told me, that the Marquis de Nesle is dead: he sends his compliments to you, and so does Corbinelli, on your son's contusion: the circumstance of being on the thigh makes it of consequence. Adieu, my dear love; I am again stationary at Paris, after an absence of four days in the country, in which the fine weather and the exercise I took were of service to me; but God did not permit I should enjoy this little pleasure long.

[1] The Comte de Mornay, killed at the battle of Manheim.

*LETTER 810

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, November 17, 1688.

To-day our Marquis completes his seventeenth year. To what constitutes his introduction into life, we must add a very good little contusion, which does him, I assure you, great honour, from the cool and composed manner in which he received it. The Chevalier will inform you how M. de St.-Maure reported it to the King: he is overwhelmed with compliments at Versailles, and I am so here. Madame de Lavardin desired me to meet her yesterday at Madame de La Fayette's: they both congratulated me: the latter said to me, with an air of triumph, the moment she saw me: "Well, what will Madame de Grignan have to find fault with now? Tell her she ought to be delighted; that if such a thing could be purchased, no price would be too great for it; and that, in short, she is too happy." I promised to inform you of this, and I do it with pleasure. Receive also the sincere congratulations of Madame de Lavardin, of Madame de Coulanges, the Duchesse du Lude, the *Divinities* [1], the Duchesse de Villeroi, and Father Morel [2], whom I saw afterwards, as I went to visit poor St.-Aubin. My dear child, the pious wish of this good man to die has made him hasten all the sacraments: the *Curé* of St.-Jacques would not give him extreme unction yesterday, which was a source of great grief to him; he wishes for nothing but death, and longs to be united to God: his calmness, resignation, tranquillity, and detachment from the world, are beyond anything I have ever witnessed, and almost supernatural. The relief he has found in Father Morel and his *Curé*, who are his directors, his friends, his nurses, and his physicians, is by no means

[1] Madame de Frontenac and Mademoiselle d'Outrelaise.

[2] A celebrated Director of the Oratory.

common, and has given him a foretaste of heaven. Duchêne is his physician: he is an excellent creature: he does not torment you, does not dose you with medicines: "Try, Sir, to perspire, and have patience." There is no noise in the room, no confusion, no offensive smell: the patient has no fever, except what is internal and imperceptible; his head is clear; he is silent himself on account of the load upon his chest, but he listens to rational and good discourse in which there is no trifling: this is divine, and what is seldom witnessed. He thinks himself, poor man, unworthy to die in the same place [1] where Madame de Longueville died. I told all this to Tréville [2], who was at Madame de La Fayette's; he replied, "This is the way in which everyone dies at that place." Duchêne does not think it will be over soon. How much, my dear child, you would be affected at this holy spectacle! I do not say with grief, but with consolation and envy. St.-Aubin has evinced great regard both for me and for you in his interest for your son; but all this is momentary only, and he constantly returns to Jesus Christ and his mercy, which are his chief concern. But I must not overwhelm you with this melancholy recital. I wished to thank you, and that from my heart, for having taken the longest road to avoid the little streams which have swelled into rivers: do always thus, and not trust to the uncertainty of an enterprise, for which there is no remedy when you have one foot in the water. Think of M. de La Vergne, and, if you please, of me;

[1] A large house adjoining the Carmelites of the Faubourg St.-Jacques, which Madame de Longueville occupied, and where, it is well known, she died, like a true Christian, on the 15th April, 1679, after a penitence of twenty-seven years. See Letter 617, of April 12th, 1680, in the fourth volume.

[2] Henri-Joseph de Peyre, Comte de Tréville, or Troisville, after the greatest success in war and at Court, retired from the world for the purposes of study and devotion. He spoke with so much perspicuity and energy, that it is supposed the proverb, *he speaks like a book*, was made for him. He had as much openness of character as wit and eloquence. The witticism Madame de Sévigné puts in the mouth of M. de La Rochefoucauld, "He is a man made of a whole piece; he has no joints," was said by Bossuet of M. de Tréville, who replied, when it was repeated to him, "If I have no joints, he has no bones;" thus

but promise always to take the longest and safest way: there is no comparison between impatience and drowning [1]. Was not Pauline with you in this litter? did her little face weary you? You cut me very short sometimes, in particulars I wish to be informed of: you think I shall, on that account, write the less: by no means, my dearest; I do not govern myself by you. Your brother is at St.-Brieuc, at the wedding of Mademoiselle de La Coste: M. de Chaulnes was there; but for the presence of this Governor, the bridegroom would have flown. I feel as if I had a great many excuses to make you for the siege of Manheim: I was so positively assured that it would be nothing, that I hoped to make you pass it insensibly: but it is over, and if you had been mistress of the event, could it have proved more favourable to your wishes? Endeavour then to sleep soundly; I answer to you for the rest. The Fable of the Hare [2] appears to me very applicable to your situation: "There is no genuine peace; some new assault is always at hand." You might also add: "Correct yourself! some wise head will exclaim, Correct yourself! —Alas, as if fear could be corrected!" But you cannot say, with another part of the Fable, "I believe that men possess, in reality, as much fear as I do:" for I think men have no fear at all.

The Archbishop's is a happy old age; I consider myself honoured by his remembrance. I shall attack the Coadjutor some day; I shall tell him of our good management at Paris: I am delighted that he loves you, more for his sake than your own; for it would be a bad sign, for his understanding and his taste, if he did not estimate you properly. I love Pauline: you describe her as blooming and good-humoured: I see her running everywhere, and

calling to mind the singular pliancy Bossuet had displayed, as a prelate and a theologian.

[1] The Abbé de La Vergne-Tressan, as distinguished by his virtues and his piety, as by his birth and talents, was washed away in his litter in crossing the Gardon, a deep little river, and drowned through the imprudence and obstinacy of his muleteer, in 1684.

[2] She alludes to La Fontaine's Fable of "The Hare and the Frogs."

telling everybody of the conquest of Philisbourg; I see her and embrace her; love, my dear child, love your daughter; it is the most rational and delightful occupation in the world; but continue to love your dear mamma also, who is more yours than her own.

M. de Bailli is just gone from hence: he stammered out a thousand kind things for you, but with so much cordiality, that you must be obliged to him. My dear Comte, I must say one word to you respecting our little boy. This campaign was your work; you have great reason to be satisfied; everything tends to convince you that you did well. I feel both your joy and my own. I do not say it to flatter you, but everyone speaks highly of your son: his perseverance, coolness, intrepidity, and almost his rashness, are applauded.

*LETTER 811

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, November 19, 1688.

I shall continue the pious and tragical story of poor St.-Aubin. They came to tell me, on Wednesday last, immediately after I had written to you, that he had received extreme unction: I ran to him with M. de Coulanges; I found him very ill, but so perfectly collected in mind, and with so little appearance of fever, that I could not believe he was at the point of death: he had even a facility in coughing, which gave hopes to those who do not know that this is a sign of the entire corruption of the mass of blood, which changes gradually, and at length destroys the sufferer. I found again the same calmness, the same affection, the same gratitude, in this poor invalid; and in the midst of all, a constant looking to God, and an unceasing and ardent prayer to Jesus Christ, imploring pardon through his precious blood. The two excellent men I mentioned were with him, and stayed with him to the

last. The *Miserere* was said, to which he showed his attention by his eyes and gestures. He made the proper responses to the extreme unction, and asked for a paraphrase of it. At length, at nine at night, he desired me to leave him, bidding me distinctly a last adieu. Father Morel remained with him, and I have heard, that at midnight he had a terrible fit: the machine was deranged; he afterwards vomited, as if nature still sought relief: he sweated profusely, as in a crisis, and then fell into a dose, which was interrupted only by Father Morel, who, holding him in his arms, and the dying man answering still with gratitude and love to God, at length received his last breath, and passed the rest of the night in piously lamenting him, and praying for his soul. The cries of his wife were calmed, and her tears dried up, by this good Father; so that there was nothing that was not truly Christian in this holy habitation. I was there the next day, which was yesterday; he was not at all changed; he excited neither in me, nor in anyone who saw him, the least horror: he was one of the elect: we venerate the grace of God, which was so visible in him. His will was read; nothing can be more just, nothing better written: he makes an excuse for having sunk his property in an annuity, which was occasioned by the want of the means of subsistence; he yielded, he says, to the temptation of giving eleven thousand francs, that he might end his life comfortably, and die in the holy society of the Carmelites; he speaks well of his wife, and praises her attentions and assiduity: he desires M. de Coulanges to take care of her, and wishes his goods to be sold to pay a few trifling debts. He praises me too highly, both on the score of my heart, and of our long friendship, commends the care of his wife to me, and speaks of himself and his burial with a humility so truly Christian, that I was equally pleased and affected. We went this morning to a service performed at St.-Jacques solely for him. The hearts of many who were present were touched with the account of his merit and his virtue: Madame Foucault, Madame Fouquet, M. and Madame

d'Aguesseau, Madame de La Houssaie, Madame Le Bossu, Mademoiselle de Grignan, Bréauté, and several others. From thence we went to the Carmelites, where he is buried. The clergy received him from the clergy of Saint-Jacques: it was a mournful ceremony. All the nuns were in the gallery with torches, and sung the *Libera*; the corpse was then placed in a deep grave, where it will remain for ever. He is no longer in the world, time no longer exists to him, he has entered upon eternity. To tell you that such a ceremony could be witnessed without tears, is impossible; but they are pleasing tears, their source is not bitter, they are tears of consolation and envy. We saw the Mother of the Holy Sacrament; and after having been the niece of the good St.-Aubin, I became again the mother of Madame de Grignan: the last title restored me so truly to happiness, that Coulanges, who was listening to us, said: "Ah, this is as it should be! How well the ball is kept up!" This lady is highly agreeable: what did she not say of the perfect esteem she bears you, of your law-suit, your talents, your heart, your love for me, the care that ought to be taken of my health in your absence, your courage in leaving your son in the midst of the dangers to which he was to be exposed, his contusion, his rising reputation, and the thanks which were due to God for having preserved him? She introduced me too into all this. But what more, my dear, shall I say? If I were to tell you all, I should never have done: none but the inhabitants of heaven can be superior to these holy personages.

I found the Chevalier returned from Versailles yesterday evening, in good health: I was delighted. When he is here, I take advantage of the charms of his society; when he is there, I am equally pleased, because I know it is for the good of his family. He told me the Marquis's contusion was the news at Versailles, and was spoken of in the most agreeable manner possible. He received the compliments of Madame de Maintenon, who was informed of the circumstance by the Dauphin: the whole Court shared the joy; every note I have received here, has been

filled with congratulations; and what completes my happiness is, that the Dauphin is on the road, and the Marquis also: if after this, my dear child, you do not sleep soundly, I really know not what you would have. The Chevalier told me nothing but good news all the evening; but he has forbidden me to tell you more than that I feel grateful to Providence for coming to your assistance, just at the time when you were ready to hang yourself, and I was almost ready to consent to it. Adieu, my beloved. Madame de Brancas has just left me; she sends you compliments of all sorts. We expect great news from England, but it is not yet arrived.

*LETTER 812

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, November 22, 1688.

I have nothing to say of my health, except that it is excellent. The Chevalier and I have been paying visits all the day, to Madame Ollier, Madame Cornuel, Madame de Frontenac, Madame de Maisons, and M. du Bois, who has a little hurt in his leg. I said at the *Divinities'*, that if I were entering life instead of quitting it, I should attribute the disappearance of a thousand little complaints, which I formerly had, and which I feel no longer, to this agreeable routine. Keep this in your mind, my dear child; and since you love me, be not ungrateful to God, who preserves your poor mamma in a way, which seems to be made expressly for her. I think no more of the medicine; since it has done me no harm, it has done me good. I shall eat rice out of gratitude for the pleasure it gives me, by preserving your beautiful cheeks, and your health, which is so precious to me. What a constitution you must have, to have borne what you have done! pain of body and of mind, bitter uneasiness, dreadful alarms, and violent agitations,

everything, in short, without reckoning the swamps which you will no doubt meet with in your way, in a greater number than you at present imagine: you have resisted all these, my dear child! I am astonished, and believe that the courage God has given you, is almost supernatural. But you have a son who is no longer a *babe in swaddling-clothes*, as Madame de Coulanges calls him; he is a fine valiant youth, who has distinguished himself above others of his years. M. de Beauvilliers has written wonders of him to the Chevalier, and nothing is to be subtracted from his account; this little man is full of good will: we wonder how his silence and timidity gave way to other qualities.

So happy a beginning deserves to be well kept up; but I ought not to address this discourse to you, for nothing I imagine can be added to your sentiments upon the subject. The breaking up of M. de La Rochefoucauld's table forms the subject of all the conversation here, at present; it is a great event at Versailles. He told the King he was ruined by it, and that he would not incur expenses that would lead him into injustice. Not only the table has disappeared, but a certain chamber also, in which the courtiers assembled, because he would neither remind them, nor himself, of the accommodating vehicle which used to be loaded daily with banqueters. He has dismissed forty-two of his servants. This is great news, and an excellent example.

You know I was not long at Brévanes; I have informed you of the melancholy scene which hastened my return. The weather is dull and rainy: never was there so wretched an autumn. In truth we have no fear of gnats; we are afraid only of being drowned. Your sun is very different from ours. I love Pauline, I think her very pretty; I think she pleases you much; I think she adores you. Ah, how can she help adoring so excellent a mother? I say of her, as you said of the Princesse de Conti: it is a delightful thing to be compelled to this duty. Let her learn Italian; the Prior is at Aix, and will be delighted to teach her. I see the Comte's speech has been very well

turned. Present my compliments to your Grignans, and, if you please, to M. d'Aix. How fortunate you are, to think differently from what you formerly did! You saw in this country the price that was given. When you are not on ill terms with M. d'Aix, his conversation is animated and pleasant; and as he is satisfied, I hope you will be at peace.

I have a piece of intelligence to give you, which is scarcely worth mentioning, that Franckendal surrendered on the eighteenth of this month: it was only necessary to show the cannon; not a soul was killed, or even wounded. The Dauphin has come away, and will be at Versailles this day week, the twenty-ninth, and your son also. You have received letters from him: oh! for once then, be perfectly satisfied, and thank God for this happy beginning. Adieu, my beloved and amiable child. I must not omit to tell you, that I desired the Mother Prioress of the Carmelites to guess what was your employment, after having gained your law-suit: you will suppose that she could not. "It was this, Mother," said I, "since I must conceal nothing from you; she raised a corps of Light Horse." I know not what she thought of this confidence, but she burst into so natural and hearty a laugh, that all our sorrow vanished: I did not forget to tell her of your perfect esteem for the inhabitants of this holy convent. This Mother knows well how to lead the conversation.

*LETTER 813

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Tuesday, November 23, 1688.

The Chevalier set out yesterday for Versailles; he wishes to be ready to receive the Dauphin, and perhaps he will go and meet him with the King. Your son is also on the road, with the satisfaction of having made the most fortunate campaign that could have been wished, even if

we had had the forming of it ourselves; for you see that we could not have omitted the contusion, which has brought us so many compliments: for example, Madame de Lavardin, Madame d'Uxelles, Madame de La Fayette, and Mademoiselle Rochefoucauld, have loaded us with them; but these are so good they must not be confounded with the rest. Madame de Lavardin swears and protests that the Marquis has great personal merit, and that nothing could be more fortunate for him than this campaign. The Chevalier and I often talk of you; we wish you health and strength to bear all the adverse circumstances you may meet with in your way: here we have a thousand distractions; there, we have none: we always harp upon the same string; we conjure you above all things, to be careful of your health. Coffee is in disgrace here, and consequently I take none: I thought, however, that it did me some good at Brévanes; but I have given it up, notwithstanding. We wish to persuade you, that considering the air you breathe, it must heat your blood, and we would confine you to chicken-broth. I see you overwhelmed with letter-writing; everybody writes to you; you are attacked on all sides, and you contend with ten at once. M. de *** [1] never did half so much as you. Retrench your work therefore, and begin the retrenchment with me; I shall consider this little kindness as a proof of your regard for me. Begin your letter yourself, but at the sixth line give the pen to Pauline: this will be an employment for her mind; you know too well, that nothing is so bad for the chest, as writing eternally and unceasingly as you do. I will set you an example, though the consequence be an abridgement of my pleasures; and will not importune you for useless conversations: talk to me only, in your letters, of yourself and your affairs; for, to speak plainly, I take

[1] It is said, that M. de*** having persuaded himself, that he had killed five men with whom he had fought singly, asked the King's pardon; and that, walking a short time afterwards with M. de La Feuillade, he wished to know the names of two persons who were passing. "You will find," said M. de La Feuillade, in reply, "that they are two of the men you killed not long ago."

too much interest in what concerns you, to dispense with knowing it. This is all you shall have at present. You know my mode of life; the days pass, whether we are sad or cheerful; and at last, we shall come to the last: I will love you, my dear Comtesse, till that day inclusively.

*LETTER 814

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, November 26, 1688.

I have been chatting for an hour with Soleri; it is not his fault if I am not happy with regard to your health; but the fever in your blood does not appear when you are beautiful and brilliant in your gallery, and raising your company of horse; for it was through your means: and though, as you say, there is a degree of shame in being so well acquainted with men, you ought to be glad that you have rendered so important a service to your son: you must place it to the account of all the other good things which fortune has thrown in his way in the last three months. I have never witnessed a more desirable entrance into the world, or the army: his courage, firmness, coolness, prudence, and good conduct, have been conspicuous. I saw M. de Pomponne yesterday evening, who was just come from Versailles. He was full of the subject, and delighted at the happy termination of this first campaign; he desired me to congratulate you upon it, and so did Madame de Pomponne. Madame de Lillebonne and her daughters, whom I saw at the Marquise d'Uxelles', talked incessantly, and sent you a thousand affectionate compliments. Everything is alive to you in this country: what a pity it is, that the fashion of being in two places at once is not yet introduced! you would be very serviceable here to your family. Chance has placed Valcroissant at Salins, from whence he sends an account to M. de Louvois

of the horses that pass to remount the troops; he has declared and certified, that those of the Marquis de Grignan were the finest of the whole: you may judge with what pleasure he has told this truth. Soleri swears that he will not come near you, till he has seen and touched your son. The Dauphin will be here to-morrow; the Marquis on Wednesday: I own I shall be delighted to embrace this little hero; he seems to me to be a different being: would to God you could have the same pleasure.

I recommend to you, my dear child, a little rest, a little tranquillity if it be possible, a little resignation to the will of Providence, and a little philosophy; you trust too much to your courage, and your health suffers by it: this is easily said; but, after all, if we were not supported by invisible means, we should sink. I entreat you above all things, not to write too much: I, for instance, write on Mondays and Wednesdays, to you only; one letter is nothing; but you could never do this. I do not fatigue myself; writing to you is a consolation to me, unmixed with pain; your writing to me is a load, not upon your heart, but your health.

Soleri has informed me of the eagerness which is evinced to receive M. de Grignan at Avignon [1]; after what I have seen, this does not surprise me: the situation has its advantages and dignities. We expect news from England, with impatience: the Prince (of Orange) is landed: the King's army is considerable; nothing has disappointed him yet; if this continue, he will crush this rash adventurer. We fear for the happiness and abilities of M. de Schomberg. Adieu, my beloved: I conclude out of pure malice, and set you an example, for I am not at all fatigued.

[1] It has been seen, that Pope Innocent XI. quarrelled with the King, on the subject of the *régale*. After having attacked his spiritual power, by the famous decisions of the Assembly of the Clergy, Louis XIV. wished also to strike him in his temporal power; and Avignon, of which he had taken possession, fell into the dependence of M. de Grignan's government.

*LETTER 815

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, November 29, 1688.

I have been sorry, my dear child, for this colic without colic; all painful things grieve me: for this sort of colics it is sometimes necessary to take cooling medicines: heating remedies inflame the blood, and occasion great pain. "But, my Lord," as Corneille says, "you do not listen to me;" you have no opinion of my skill, and think yourself very clever; I have nothing therefore to say to you, except recommending to your care your own health, if you have any regard for mine.

You have been grieved at my tears for St.-Aubin; alas! think not that they have done me harm; they were tears of kindness and consolation, which did not wring my heart, nor injure my constitution: make yourself easy therefore on this subject, as well as on that of your son: you have done as Madame de La Fayette said, laughing, you would do; you have discovered something to find fault with in this contusion: but after what the Chevalier told you, after the letters of du Plessis, and even of your son, ought you not to consider, as everyone else does, this little adventure as a blessing? If the contusion had been in the head, I would forgive you for shutting your heart to joy; but when, to repair the flesh, nothing was required but a little Hungary water,—indeed, you are not worthy the favour God has shown to your boy in this campaign. Ah, make yourself happy now, at least! Madame de La Fayette has just informed me that her son has arrived, that he has said a thousand handsome things of yours, and that he would have come himself to give me tidings of him, if he were not obliged to go to Versailles, where the Dauphin arrived last evening. The good little Marquis will be here on Wednesday or Thursday.

I have seen Madame de Mornay; she is not at all afflicted. Madame de Nesle [1] is in excess of grief; and it is perfect martyrdom to her, to be exposed in the apartment of *la Bécasse* [2] (the Woodcock), where everyone comes to condole with her, and where she sits motionless, petrified with sorrow. Madame de Maintenon protects her, and wishes her to be liked in the family; she wishes her also to receive visits as formerly. I could tell you many more particulars of these two visits: Madame de Coulanges was with me; she took me, out of complaisance, to Madame de La Cour-des-Bois, who is a miracle of grief and affliction, saying things which pierce the heart; and with so much truth and nature, that she reduced us both to tears.

I suppose you to be returned to Lambesc; these removals are bad in all respects. I long for you to be settled a little at Aix, and afterwards at Grignan. I am convinced you will live on friendly terms with the Archbishop of Aix, since you behave as persons who have seen each other before, which is what I always recommended to you. Adieu, my beloved: this is deplorable weather; the sheep are no longer hardy enough to venture to stay in our meadows at Livry: I am delighted that you still remember this little country, of which I never think without a sigh. It is warm, perhaps, with you, and you are tormented with gnats; alas, my child! this is a proof how distant we are from each other.

[1] Marie de Coligny, Marquise de Nesle.

[2] Jeanne de Monchi, Marquise de Mailly, mother-in-law of Madame de Nesle.

*LETTER 816

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Tuesday evening, November 30, 1688.

I write to you this evening, my child, because I am going to-morrow at nine o'clock, to the service for our poor St.-Aubin, a respect our holy Carmelites pay him out of pure friendship; I shall see them afterwards, and you will be praised, as you often are: from thence I shall go and dine with Madame de La Fayette.

You give me an excellent idea of your eldest daughter [1]; I see her before me; pray embrace her for me; I rejoice that she is happy. For your son, you may love him as much as you please; he deserves it; everyone speaks highly of him, and praises him in a way that would give you pleasure: we expect him this week. I have felt all the force of the phrase he made use of to gain esteem, "which must come, or tell the reason why:" it brought tears into my eyes at the moment; but esteem is come already, and will not have to say why it stayed away. The reputation of this child is already commenced, and will now only increase. The Chevalier is perfectly satisfied, I assure you. I was at first uneasy at the contusion, from the fear of consequences: but when I saw the Chevalier was delighted at it; when I heard that he had received the compliments of the whole Court, and of Madame de Maintenon, upon the occasion, who replied to him with a delightful tone and manner, on his saying it was nothing, "Sir, it is much better than nothing;" when I myself am overwhelmed too with compliments of congratulation; I own all this has vanquished me, and I rejoice with them all, and with M. de Grignan, who so well fixed and arranged this dear boy's first campaign.

[1] Marie Blanche Adhémar, a nun in the convent of *La Visitation* at Aix.

You cannot mention the subject of our dinners and suppers more opportunely; I have just supped at the Lieutenant's, with Madame de Vauvineux, the Abbé de La Fayette, the Abbé Bigorre and Corbinelli. I have supped twice at Madame de Coulanges' with no other company. The *Divinities* are out of joint: the Duchesse du Lude has been at Verneuil, she is now at Versailles. The Dauphin arrived there on Sunday; the King received him in the Forest of Boulogne; the Dauphiness, MONSIEUR, MADAME, Madame de Bourbon, the Princesse de Conti, and Madame de Guise, were in the carriage. The Dauphin alighted, and the King would do the same: the Dauphin embraced his father's knees; the King said to him: "It is not thus I wish to receive you; you deserve a different welcome:" and they threw their arms round each other, with the warmest affection: the Dauphin then embraced those who were in the carriage, and took his seat there. The Chevalier can tell you more. I believe you are informed of the readiness with which the King granted your request respecting Avignon: you must therefore, my beloved child, defer to another opportunity the plan you had formed of hanging yourself.

I have kept at home: the first visitor I had was M. de Pomponne, who loves and admires you; for to admire and to remember you are the same thing. Afterwards I had Madame (la Presidente) Croiset, the President Rossignol; and we had to begin your praises anew, and the account of your law-suit. I have seen St.-Hérem, who sends you a thousand compliments on the contusion, and thanks you for yours to him, on the fall of his son: he will benefit by the overthrow of saucepans at M. de La Rochefoucauld's, whose good cheer destroyed him. Adieu, most amiable and beloved child: I am going to bed to please you, as you kept from drowning to please me. There is nothing for which I am so much obliged to you, as for the preservation of your health. I said to you yesterday, I believe, that your warm weather and your gnats showed me too clearly, that we had not the same sun: it froze last

week most severely; after that it snowed; so that yesterday we could not stand: now the rain pours in torrents, and we cannot tell whether there is such a thing as the sun in creation.

*LETTER 817

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday evening, December 1, 1688.

I wrote to you last night, because I was to go this morning to the service performed for poor St.-Aubin, and from thence to dine with Madame de La Fayette. I have seen her son, who told me a great many fine things of yours, and even of M. du Plessis, at which I was very much gratified; for I feared whether he would take the air of that country in good part: but he has assured me, that he did wonders there, often leaving the Marquis when he was at table in good company and good spirits. "I see plainly," said he, "that a preceptor has no business here;" and this in the highest good humour possible. You will receive letters from your son: he is at Metz, and will not be here till Sunday: does this give you uneasiness? Briole and Tréville have come to Madame de La Fayette's: they desire to be mentioned to you. Briole has repeated to us a letter written by M. de Montausier to the Dauphin, after the conquest of Philisbourg, which pleases me much:— "MONSEIGNEUR, I do not compliment you upon the taking of Philisbourg: you had an excellent army, bombs, cannon, and Vauban. Neither do I compliment you upon your valour; it is a virtue hereditary in your family. But I rejoice, that you are liberal, generous, humane, and appreciate duly the services of those who have behaved well: and it is for these things, I beg you to accept my congratulations." Everyone thinks this style worthy of M. de Montausier, and of a preceptor.

Our Carmelites said a thousand kind things of you; the ball was not ill kept up to-day, but Madame de Cou-

langes did not stir from her seclusion. From the Carmelites, we went to see this little woman [1], who will be too happy, if she has sense to feel it. My carriage came to take me at five o'clock to Madame de La Fayette's: I was told the Chevalier was returned, and I flew hither: I merely stopped at M. de La Trousse's: he has arrived, but is far from well: he is very thin. Adieu, my best love: I have not changed my sentiments for you since last night.

*LETTER 818

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, December 3, 1688.

I have to inform you to-day, that the King made yesterday seventy-four Knights of the Order of the Holy Ghost, of whom I send you the list. As he has done M. de Grignan the honour to include him, and as you will receive a hundred thousand congratulations upon the occasion, wiser heads than mine advise you, neither to say nor write anything that may give offence to any of your companions in this honour. The best way, perhaps, would be to write to M. de Louvois, and to say that the honour he had done you of enquiring after you by your courier, gives you the privilege of thanking him; and that wishing to believe, on the subject of the favour the King has just granted to M. de Grignan, that he has contributed towards it by his approbation at least, you return him thanks also for this. You will give this a better turn than I can do; and it will do no injury to the letter M. de Grignan should write. The particulars of what passed are these: The King said to M. Le Grand [2]: "The Comte de Soissons [3] and you must agree among yourselves with respect to rank." You must know, that M. Le Grand's son is in

[1] The widow of M. de Saint-Aubin.

[2] Louis de Lorraine, Comte d'Armagnac, First Equerry of France.

[3] Louis-Thomas de Savoie, Comte de Soissons.

the promotion, which is contrary to the general rules. You must know also, that the King said to the Ducs, that he had read their memorial, and that he found that the House of Lorraine had taken precedence of them on several occasions; and so it is decided [1]. M. Le Grand then spoke to the Comte de Soissons: they proposed to draw lots, "provided," said the Comte, "that if you win, I pass between you and your son [2]." M. Le Grand would not consent to this, and so the Comte de Soissons is not a Chevalier. The King asked M. de La Trémouille how old he was: he replied, that he was thirty-three: the King excused him two years. This favour, it is said, which has given some offence to the Principality, has not been estimated as it ought to have been. However, he is the first Duc, according to the precedence of his Duchy [3]. The King spoke to M. de Soubise, and told him, he was willing to confer the Order on him, but that, as he was not a Duc, he must rank after the Ducs: M. de Soubise thanked him for this honour, and only requested, that the offer and the refusal should be mentioned in the register of the Order, for family reasons, which was granted. The King said aloud: "Some surprise will be excited at the appointment of M. d'Hocquincourt [4], and he will himself be as much surprised as anyone, for he has never spoken to me on the subject; but I ought not to forget, that when his father quitted my service, his son rushed into Péronne, and defended the town against his father [5]." There is

[1] It is related, that the Duc de Luxembourg said aloud upon this subject: "There is one thing I cannot comprehend."—"And what is that?" said the King.—"How a Bourbon can look upon a Guise."

[2] Henri de Lorraine, Comte de Brionne.

[3] Messieurs de La Trémouille have the highest rank at Court, as being the eldest Ducs, and Messieurs d'Usèz the highest rank in the Parliament, as being the eldest Peers.

[4] Georges de Monchi, Marquis d'Hocquincourt, Lieutenant-General of the King's army, son of Charles de Monchi, Maréchal d'Hocquincourt.

[5] This fact happened in the year 1658. The Confederacy of the Fronde was still felt and resented. Maréchal d'Hocquincourt, the same who, in the year 1649, wrote to the beautiful Montbazon this famous note, "Péronne belongs to the fairest of the fair," seduced a

great virtue in this remembrance. After the list of seventy-three was filled up, the King recollected the Chevalier de Sourdis [1], whom he had forgotten; he asked for the list again, and said he was going to do a thing contrary to the rules of the Order, because there would be a hundred and one Knights; but that he thought they would agree with him, that M. de Sourdis ought not to be omitted, and that he highly deserved the favour. This is another kind recollection. They were all therefore nominated yesterday, at Versailles: the ceremony of the installation will take place on the first day of the New Year; this is a short time; many are excused from being present, and you perhaps will be of the number. The Chevalier is going to Versailles, to return thanks to the King.

We supped yesterday at M. de Lamoignon's; the Duchesse de Villeroi came as a neighbour: she sends you her compliments, and accepts yours. M. de Beauvais [2] came also: the King told him, he was sorry not to be able to confer on him the Order of Knighthood, but assured him, that he should have the first vacancy. There are so many ready to vacate, that he may be almost considered as having obtained it.

M. and Madame de Pelletier were among the first to

second time by the Duchesse de Châtillon, was preparing to surrender the town of Péronne to the Spaniards, and the great Condé. The Court having prevented this in time, he went over to the enemy; and his son found himself commissioned to defend the place against the army in which his father was serving. The Court, however, lost in him only a General of very moderate talents, who, in 1651, suffered himself with seven thousand men to be completely beaten at Blenau, by the great Condé, at the head of a detachment of less than twelve hundred men. He was killed in the same year, 1658, in a skirmish near Dunkirk, on the eve of the battle of the Downs.

Maréchal d'Hocquincourt is well known, by his singular conversation with the Jesuit Canaye. Everyone must have read this striking fragment in St. Evremond, which, however, is not by this author, but almost entirely by Charleval.

[1] François d'Escoubleau, Comte de Sourdis, Lieutenant-General of the King's army, Governor of the town of Orléans.

[2] Toussaint de Forbin, Bishop and Comte de Beauvais, afterwards Cardinal, was made Commander of the King's orders, in a private promotion, on the 29th of May, 1689.

congratulate you, as well as Madame de Vauvineux, M. and Madame de Luynes, and, in short, all France. I am going out this evening, that I may see only the list (of visits). Nothing can compare with the torrent of compliments which everywhere overwhelms us. But while many are satisfied, there are many who are not so. M. de Rohan, M. de Brissac, M. de Canaples, Messieurs d'Ambres, de Tallard, de Calvisson, du Roure, de Peyre, M. de Mailli, an old Lord related to the Higher Powers; Messieurs de Livry, de Cavoie, the Grand-Provost (M. de Sourches), and others whom I have forgotten: this is always the case. Adieu, my beloved child; I embrace you and congratulate you also, and M. de Grignan, and the Coadjutor. I shall write to M. d'Arles on Monday, after I have seen the Marquis. I will add no other subject to this letter: except one observation, that God sends you help by this means, and by means of Avignon, which ought to take away your desire of hanging yourself.

The Abbé Têtu sends you all sorts of compliments. Madame de Coulanges intends to write to M. de Grignan: she was yesterday too agreeable with Father Gaillard; she wanted no one but M. de Grignan, who was her *blue ribbon*; she wished everyone was like him; everything else was indifferent to her, now the King had done you justice. The Chevalier laughed heartily, understanding, by this approbation, her disapprobation of several others [1].

*LETTER 819

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, December 6, 1688.

Your last letter has an air of gaiety and expansion of heart, which convinces me that Frankendal is taken, and that he is safe, I mean the Marquis. Enjoy this pleasure,

[1] Madame de Maintenon had caused her brother M. d'Aubigné, and her friends Messieurs de Montchevreuil and de Villarceau, to be included in this promotion.

my beloved child: your son sleeps to-night at Claie; you see he will pass through Livry, and to-morrow he will sup with us. The Chevalier, who is indeed an excellent creature in all respects, has returned from Versailles: he has thanked the King, and it has all passed off well. You will assume the *blue ribbon* on the second of January in the midst of Provence, over which you have the command, and where there are only you and M. d'Arles your uncle. This distinction and remembrance of His Majesty, when you the least expected it, are highly gratifying: even the compliments you receive on all sides, are not like those which are paid to others: it is to little purpose to say, "Ah this! ah that!" for my part, I say on this subject, as on many others, "What is good, is good;" you will lose nothing; and when we think of those who are in despair, we consider ourselves very fortunate to be in the recollection of a master who does not forget the services that are rendered him both by ourselves and our children. I own to you I feel this joy thoroughly, without appearing to do so. The Chevalier has a great desire to send word of it this evening to our Marquis at Claie, who will not be insensible to it. He wishes also to send you your *blue ribbon* with two Saint-Esprits, because the time draws on; he believes you have your grandfather's [1] cross at Grignan; if you have not, you would be at a loss for one. I own that if the Chevalier had not forestalled me, I should have made you this pretty little present; but I give place to him in everything. The favour is complete by the permission of not attending the installation. I am charged with a hundred compliments; Madame de Lesdiguières, Madame de Mouci, Madame de Lavardin, M. de Harlai, and I know not how many others I could name; for they are in long lists, as when you gained your law-suit. Think not, my dear child, that you have been out of luck for the last three months: I begin with your gaining your cause;

[1] Louis Castellane Adhémar de Monteil, who was created Knight of the King's orders in 1584, and Lieutenant-General of the government of Provence, was M. de Grignan's great-grandfather.

then the preservation of your son; his early reputation: his contusion; the beauty of his company, to which you contributed; and I conclude with the business of Avignon and the *blue ribbon*: think well of this, and be thankful to God. It is true, you have suffered severely: to leave your child and the means of hearing of him, to remove from him at a time of peril, was a death-stroke, I grant you; and then to be deprived of the pleasure of experiencing all the subsequent joys in the heart of the little family you have here; we have shared this sorrow too with you, as well as that of not being able to see the little urchin, whom we shall see to-morrow: all this is painful; but it is the will of God, my dear child, that good and evil should be blended together.

M. de Grignan has reason to triumph and exult over you in this first campaign of his son: the idea of the contrary makes me tremble. What an era! Philisbourg and the Dauphin. A wound at sixteen years of age, and an established reputation. M. de Beauvilliers, whose son he was: this corps, the fruit of your labours, which is decidedly the finest in the army. You were right, my dear Comte, and my daughter was wrong: do not lose this opportunity of triumphing, you well know why.

Let us talk a little, my beloved, of your health; mine is perfect: no extravagance, no lure, no *hi's*, no *ha's*, a machine well regulated in all respects. Guard your chest, do not write too much; your chicken broths have been substituted for coffee to cool you: manage yourself, govern yourself, if you love your son, your family, your husband, your mother, your brothers; for, in a word, you are the life and soul of all these.

The spot where St.-Aubin rests is under the choir, on the right as you enter, that you may not take Brancas [1] for him. It is very good of you to wear mourning for St.-Aubin: alas! a poor recluse, though so pious, makes no great noise in the world. M. de Tréville was enthusiastic

[1] Charles, Marquis de Brancas, who died January 8, 1681, was buried at the Carmelites.

the other day at Madame de La Fayette's in praise of your merit and your beauty; for no face pleases him like yours: Madame de La Fayette supported him, Madame de Lavardin struck the full chord, and the rest joined; in short, it was a natural conversation with which vanity could not but be flattered; these are not people to throw praises to dogs. Adieu, my lovely: this is enough for to-day; I will resume the conversation the day after to-morrow. Do not repent your being praiseworthy and adored by all who behold you: if your law-suit had gained you only this, it would have been a great deal. But you seemed to me to be sufficiently polite when I was at Aix; you are now more than amiable: it is so unworthy a thing to be vain, that you have kept from falling into that error. One word, and no more; we have remarked, as well as you, that the little Marquis, whom we shall embrace to-morrow, has been constantly taken up with his corps, and never with himself: this may be called the point of perfection.

*LETTER 820

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, December 8, 1688.

This little urchin, after having sent us word that he should not arrive till yesterday (Tuesday), like a giddy fellow, came the day before yesterday, at seven o'clock in the evening, before I returned from the city. His uncle received him, and was delighted to see him; and when I returned, I found him in high spirits, and looking very well; he embraced me five or six times with a very good grace; he would kiss my hand, and I would kiss his cheeks, so that we had quite a battle; at last I got possession of his head, and kissed it where and how I pleased; I wanted to see his contusion, but as it was upon the left thigh, no offence to you, I thought it not decorous to make him undress. We chatted all the evening with this little com-

peer; he adores your portrait, and wishes much to see his dear mamma: but the quality of warrior is so severe, that we dared not propose anything. I wish you could have heard with what indifference he related the affair of the contusion, and the little regard he paid to it, and the little concern it gave him, when everyone in the trenches was uneasy at it. In a word, my dear child, if he had attended to your lessons, and had kept himself upright, he would have been killed: but, according to his good custom, being seated on the bank, he was leaning on the Comte de Guiche, with whom he was chatting. You could not have supposed, my child, that it could have been so advantageous to be a little awkward in posture. We do nothing but talk; we are delighted to see him, and we sigh that you have not the same pleasure. M. and Madame de Coulanges came to see him yesterday morning: he has returned their visit, and has called on M. de Lamoignon; he asks questions, and makes replies, happily; in short, he is a different being. I gave him a hint of the way in which he was to speak of the *cordons bleus*; as nothing else is talked of, it is well to know what to say, to avoid making unfortunate blunders, by saying what comes naturally to the tip of the tongue: he understood all this perfectly. I told him that M. de Lamoignon, who was accustomed to the chattering of little Broglio [1], was not easily reconciled to a silent person, and he talked away admirably: indeed he is a very pretty youth. We eat together; do not be alarmed: the Chevalier takes the Marquis, and I, M. du Plessis; this is a sort of play between us. Versailles will separate us, but I shall still detain M. du Plessis. I highly approve the good omen of having been preserved by his sword. If you had been here, my dear child, we might very well have gone to Livry: I am, in reality, as much mistress of it as formerly. I thank you for remembering it. I die with laughing at your fool of a woman, who will

[1] The eldest son of Victor-Maurice, Comte de Broglio, Maréchal of France, killed at the siege of Charleroi in 1693. He was the nephew of M. de Lamoignon.

not play at cards till the King of England has won a battle: she ought to be accoutred till then like an Amazon, instead of being decked out in violet and white, as when I saw her. Pauline, then, is not perfect; so much the better, you will find amusement in moulding her afresh: guide her gently: the desire of pleasing you, will have a better effect than scolding. All my friends continue to love, esteem, and praise, you: this redoubles my affection for them. My pockets are full of compliments for you. The Abbé de Guénégaud began this morning to stammer out such a high-flown one, that I said to him, "Pray make haste, Sir, if you wish to finish your compliment before the ceremony takes place." In short, my dear child, nothing is talked of but you and the Grignans. I thought with you, that the month of November was sufficiently long and full of great events; but I confess I found the month of October much longer, and more tedious; I could not at all reconcile myself to the idea of not seeing you every instant: this was a painful time; your son has diverted the course of my thoughts during the last month. I shall no longer have to say, "He will return:" you do not wish it: you wish me to say, "He is here." Be satisfied then, for here he comes indeed.

The Marquis DE GRIGNAN *also writes to his Mother.*

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *Letter.*)

"If it is not he, it is his brother, or some one belonging to him." Here I am, Madame, really and truly arrived; and think too, that I have been, of my own head, to call upon M. de Lamoignon, Madame de Coulanges, and Madame de Bagnols. Is not this the action of a man who has been at three sieges? I have chatted with M. de Lamoignon by his chimney-corner, drank coffee with Madame de Bagnols, and slept at the baths: another action of a great man. You cannot conceive my joy at having so fine a corps, an obligation I owe to you. I shall go to see it, when it passes through Châlons. Behold then al-

ready a good corps, a good Lieutenant, a good Quartermaster, and though the Captain is young, I will answer for him. Adieu, Madame; permit me to kiss your hand most respectfully.

*LETTER 821

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, December 9, 1688.

You have returned then from your estates. You have quitted the old Castles of Coligny and Cressia, for your beautiful châteaux of Bussy and Chaseu. I have to thank you for the readiness with which you entered into my occupation during the siege of Philisbourg; I have since been obliged to give all my attention to Manheim and Frankendal. I have even been trembling at the bursting of a bomb, which flattened the hilt of the Marquis's sword, as it hung upon his thigh. This blow must have fallen with the utmost nicety, for there was a very short distance between the contusion and death. You will suppose, therefore, my dear cousin, that it was a difficult matter to extricate me from all these embarrassments. I am now, however, at rest. The little de Grignan has returned; he has had, like you, the pleasure of seeing proofs of the King's remembrance in the number of Knights he is to create on the first day of the New Year. M. de Grignan is to be one, though absent: he was at his post in Provence with my daughter, just where he ought to be. He has even permission to stay away, which, in the present delicate state of his health, is much trouble and expense saved. In short, a ray of happiness has beamed upon us ever since the gaining of this law-suit, which I believe has given you great pleasure, for you love my daughter, and you know she loves you. For my part, my dear cousin, these occasions renew my grief on your account. I have not so much

courage as you; I should like to see your name where it ought to be. Alas! I am wrong, for you ought to have been a *cordon bleu* in the former promotion. In truth, my dear cousin, it is better to throw ourselves into the arms of Christianity or philosophy, than to dwell longer on this disagreeable subject. Meanwhile, the conversation everywhere is so full of the approaching ceremony, that we almost forget the affairs of England, which are of great consequence. Do you not wonder at M. de Schomberg's fate, to attach himself to the Prince of Orange, the greatest enemy of the King from whom he has received so many favours, and whom he had served with so much renown?

LETTER 822

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, December 10, 1688.

I cannot answer your letters to-day, as they came so late, and I answer two on a Monday. The Marquis is a little rustic, but not enough so to render him ridiculous; he will not have so fine a figure as his father, nor is it to be expected; in other respects he does very well, answering pertinently to everything that is asked him, like a man of good sense, who has made observations, and sought information, during his campaign: his conversation is tinctured with a modesty and rectitude that charm us. M. du Plessis is very worthy of the esteem you bear him. We take our meals together very socially, amusing ourselves with the unjust proceedings we sometimes adopt against one another; make yourself easy upon this score, and think no more about it; let it be my part to blush at thinking that a wren is a heavy burden to me: I own I am grieved at it, but we must submit to the great justice of paying our debts; no one understands this better than yourself; you have also kindness enough for me, to believe that I

am not naturally avaricious, and that I have no intention to hoard. When you are here, good Madame, you tutor your son so well, that I am compelled to admire you; but, in your absence, I undertake to teach him the common rules of conversation, which it is important to know; there are somethings of which we ought not to be ignorant. It would be ridiculous to appear astonished at certain events which are the topics of the day; I am sufficiently acquainted with these trifles. I also strongly recommend to him attention to what others say, and the presence of mind by which we quickly comprehend and answer; this is a principal object in our intercourse with the world. I repeat to him instances of miracles of this kind, which Dangeau related to us the other day; he admires them, and I lay great stress upon the charms, and even utility, of this sort of alertness of mind. In short, I obtain the Chevalier's approbation: we converse together on books, and the misfortune of being troubled with listlessness and want of employment: we call this the laziness of the mind, which deprives us of a taste for good books, and even romances; as this is an interesting subject, we frequently enter upon it. Little Auvergne [1] is very fond of reading; he was never happy when with the army, unless he had a book in his hand. God knows whether M. du Plessis and we can turn this fine and noble passion to account; we are willing to believe the Marquis susceptible of the best impressions; we suffer no opportunity to pass unimproved, that can tend to inspire him with so desirable a taste. The Chevalier is of more use to this dear boy, than can easily be imagined; he is continually striking the full chords of honour and reputation, and takes an interest in his affairs, for which you cannot sufficiently thank him: he enters into everything, attends to everything, and wishes the Marquis to regulate his own accounts, and incur no unnecessary expenses; by this means, he endeavours to give him a habit

[1] François-Egon de La Tour, Prince of Auvergne, who quitted the French army in 1702, in which he served in Germany, to enter into the service of the Emperor.

of regularity and economy, and to make him lay aside the air of grandeur, of "what does it signify," of ignorance, and indifference, which is the direct path to every kind of injustice, and, at length, to the workhouse: can there be any obligation equal to that of training up your son in these principles? For my part, I am charmed with it, and think this sort of education far more noble than any other. The Chevalier is a little afflicted with the gout: he will go to-morrow, if he can, to Versailles, and will inform you of the situation of his affairs. You already know that you are a Knight of the Order, which is a very desirable thing in the centre of your Province, and in actual service, and will admirably become M. de Grignan's fine figure: there will, however, be no one to dispute it with him in Provence, for he will not be envied by his uncle [1], as this title does not go out of the family.

La Fayette is just going from hence: he has been holding forth a full hour about one of the little Marquis's friends; he has related so many ridiculous things of him, that the Chevalier thinks himself obliged to mention them to his father, who is his friend; he thanked La Fayette for his intelligence, for in fact, there is nothing of so much consequence as being in good company, and it often happens, that, without being ridiculous ourselves, we are rendered so by those we associate with: make yourself easy upon this subject, the Chevalier will set matters right. I shall be very much mortified, if he cannot present his nephew on Sunday; this gout is a great drawback upon our happiness. With respect to Pauline, can you, my dear child, expect her to be perfect? She is not mild in her own room; many persons who are very much beloved and respected have had the same fault: I think you may easily correct it; but take particular care not to scold and humiliate her. All my friends load me with a thousand compliments and a thousand regards to you. Madame de Lavardin called upon me yesterday, to tell me she es-

[1] The Archbishop of Arles was Commander of the Royal Orders of Knighthood.

teemed you too highly to send you *compliments*; but that she embraced you with all her heart, and the great Comte de Grignan: these were her words. You have great reason to love her.

What I am going to relate is a fact. Madame de Brinon, the very soul of St.-Cyr, and the intimate friend of Madame de Maintenon, is no longer at St.-Cyr [1]; she quitted that place four days ago; Madame de Hanovre, who loves her, brought her back to the Guise Mansion, where she still remains. There does not seem to be any misunderstanding between her and Madame de Maintenon, for she sends every day to enquire after her health; this increases our curiosity to know the subject of her disgrace. Everyone is whispering about it without knowing more: if this affair should be cleared up, I will inform you of the circumstances.

LETTER 823

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, December 13, 1688.

I could never have thought I should be pleased without seeing M. de Grignan on New Year's Day; but it is certain that the Chevalier and I are very easy about the King's permission to stay away. You will do like other absent persons, and take your *blue ribbon* when you are bid; but I suppose you will be obliged to come here to

[1] Madame de Brinon, at the time of the first establishment of St.-Cyr, was placed at the head of that house. She had great learning and talents, but an equal portion of pride and ambition. The superior only of the house, she assumed the airs of an Abbess. She displayed the most offensive ostentation; she held a Court; she opposed Madame de Maintenon, whose dependent she was. These things offended the King, as well as her benefactress. A *lettre-de-cachet* obliged her to leave St.-Cyr in twenty-four hours.

The Duchess de Hanovre, who received her, and who was the daughter of the celebrated Princesse Palatine, was soon disgusted with Madame de Brinon, who retired to the Abbey of Maubuisson, and died there, regretting the world, regretting St.-Cyr, and regretting life.

complete the ceremony of Knighthood in the course of the next year, to take the collar and the oath, and thereby go through the whole installation without reproach. Thus we reason, but it is only in perspective. Your son was yesterday at Versailles with M. du Plessis: it is a pity the Chevalier could not take him there; he is, however, pretty well, but cannot leave his chair; I nursed him yesterday. Neither Turi, Amelot, du Bellai, nor any other man, could make me leave my post; but on a sudden entered the Duchesse d'Elbeuf [1], and her cousin Madame Le Coigneux; I trembled lest the Chevalier should be angry, but he was not at all so: she led the conversation, and kept it up so well for half an hour, that he was charmed with her.

To return to the little Marquis; think not that we have been insensible to the grief of this child's return, without finding you where he left you; I have not told you what I felt, and what I knew you suffered; I did not dwell upon this, and I was right. If you had seen the violent contortion of his sword; and the weight of the piece of shell that bent it upon his hip, you would certainly think he was very fortunate, and that Providence had visibly interposed in his preservation; you would adore the Omnipotent hand that had measured the blow, and guided it so fortunately for you and for us all; for we have indeed a very great affection for this little Captain. Soleri had informed us how busy you had been about his corps; but what you write to us is much more entertaining; we have read it over and over again: this diversion has done you good. Be not uneasy respecting your child's health; he has neither been bled nor received medicine; nothing of this was necessary. He has a good appetite, sleeps soundly, has a regular pulse, and is very strong, even in fatigue; this is what a physician might destroy, if we were to put him into such hands. Sanzei has returned, after being often in the trenches; he did not confine himself to the rules of a musketeer; he ate with the Dauphin, and why

[1] Françoise de Montault, daughter of Philippe de Montault, Duc de Navailles, Peer and Maréchal of France.

not? two others had done so. M. de Beauvilliers obtained him this pleasure at last, that it might lead to no farther consequence.

Madame de Bagnols, who is quite pale and thin, presents us with a gentle languor sometimes accompanied with tears; she often gives us an account of the cruel and fatal disorder of her friend, who, she maintains, was killed by a physician. Madame de Coulanges is tolerably negligent, and very calm. The Abbé Têtu is troubled with the vapours, which he communicates to all his friends; his want of sleep is almost incredible. I go to the mass of the community; the ladies of eleven o'clock have the penance to go through of hearing the Prior, who always keeps them an hour; and sometimes I go to the Duchesse du Lude's, who sends you a hundred thousand remembrances: write some answer that I can show her. Madame de Saint-Germain, Madame de Villars, Madame d'Elbeuf, and a thousand others whom I forget, do the same. I refused supping with the Duchesse de Villeroi on Wednesday, as I wished to bid adieu to Soleri; and on Thursday I would not go to the Duchesse du Lude's, because it rained violently: on Friday I went with her to eat new-laid eggs at Madame de Coulanges's. You see I inform you of all my actions; I like that you should be interested even in these trifles; this, in a manner, brings us together. I often see the Chevalier; his room [1] is very attracting; I cannot say so much of La Méri, though we agree very well together. You are very merry with the Coadjutor; he has a gaiety that makes us feel quite at our ease with him, and he appears to be attached to you, as well as M. de Carcassonne. Have they not, indeed, reason to love you passionately? what have you not done for them, for their name, for their family! entirely yielded, devoted, ruined, separated yourself from your whole family, except your mother; and why? because you have given me your whole heart. I wear your livery, and you love me.

Good God! my dear child, what fools your women

[1] It had been Madame de Grignan's.

are, both living and dead! your top-knots [1] shock me! What a profanation! it smells of paganism; foh! It would make me shudder at the thoughts of dying in Provence; I would, at least, be assured that the milliner and undertaker were not sent for at the same time. Fie, fie, indeed! but no more of this [2].

The affairs in England cannot be worse, and your lady seems as if she would not keep the whip-hand long. I will send you the good Bigorre's letter. Corbinelli is elated with your civilities; but do not kill yourself with answering him, for it would be too arduous a task. Reflect that I have only you, and this is the burden of my song, *pago lei, pago il mondo.* Madame de Chaulnes desires to be kindly remembered to you, but sends no compliments, for reasons that are too obvious. M. de Chaulnes writes very pleasantly; he narrowly escaped being drowned in going from Brest to Belle-Ile. He is at present at Rennes; I still owe him a thousand obligations. I saw MADEMOISELLE with the Duchesse de Lesdiguières: the Princesse says she will write to you: the Duchesse says all sorts of kind things of you, and particularly of M. de Grignan.

I know nothing yet respecting Madame de Brinon, except that the King has given her a pension of two thousand crowns a year; it is said she will be one of the Sisters of the Convent of St. Antoine. She preached very well, you know. The good Gobelin [3] is to succeed her, who, to fill both places, will be obliged to preach all day long. Surely, this folly, which you tell us of your preacher, could never be believed, though we have long taken it into our heads to say, "Adam, the good papa: Eve, the cruel mamma." We cannot surpass you here.

[1] It was the custom in Provence to bury the dead with their faces uncovered; and the women who wore ribbons as a head-dress, retained them in their coffins.

[2] This passage might deserve the name of presentiment. All she feared came to pass. She died in Provence, and the very head-dress which was so repugnant to her mind, adorned her in her coffin.

[3] Confessor of St.-Cyr.

You should not be ashamed of retrenching your table, since the King, after the example of his great huntsman [1], has retrenched his at Marly; there is now only the Ladies' table. Madame de Leuville, the elder, told me she no longer gave suppers: in short, we have many examples before us.

The King of England has returned to London, abandoned by those whom he thought the most faithfully attached to him: he was seized with a violent bleeding at the nose: if he had gone where he had intended, he would have been delivered up to the Prince of Orange. He has been compelled to promise to call a free Parliament next month, which it is said will be his certain ruin. His kinsman, the Prince of Denmark, and his other daughter [2], who is a second *Tullia*, and whom I shall call the *demoiselle* of Denmark, have gone to join that pest, the Prince of Orange. It is said that the little Prince [3] is not at Portsmouth, where he was supposed to be besieged; his flight will one day make an excellent romance. It is not doubted but the King his father will fly also. Thus the Prince of Orange is apparently Sovereign and Protector, and will soon be worse, unless a miracle takes place. These were the reports at three o'clock; perhaps the Abbé Bigorre will know more at night.

LETTER 824

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, December 15, 1688.

Here have I been rivetted for these two hours, to my fireside, with a little table before me, working hard, to finish my letters of business for Brittany; a letter to my

[1] M. de La Rochefoucauld.

[2] Anne Stuart, wife of Prince George, of Denmark, and Queen of England, after the death of William III., her brother-in-law.

[3] James Francis Edward, Prince of Wales, born 20th June, in the same year.

son, which I send to M. de Chaulnes for the sake of the news it contains, as he is at Rennes; and now I am going to unbend my mind and refresh my head by writing to my dear child. It is quite a relief to me to write to you, and the more so, as our little hero, who has no poetic vein, is returning from Versailles, and will take up the pen when I desire him, to relate his conduct and the motions of the Court, in the same manner as fame has trumpeted forth those of Philisbourg and Manheim.

I very much approve the answer you would have had the Dauphin make to M. de Montausier's letter: this would have been complete, and worthy of a hero. A medal has been struck with an inscription which is put into the mouth of our enemies: it represents a young eagle armed with a thunderbolt, and the legend is this line of Horace:

Tonantem credidimus Jovem.

With respect to your wearing mourning for poor St.-Aubin, I have not a word to say against it, except that it was unnecessary at such a distance, where the poor fellow was so little known. You are very good, and M. de Grignan very polite: but you must not fail to leave it off on New Year's Day, at least; the Princesse de Conti has left off her mourning for Mademoiselle de Sanzei; and M. de La Trousse will do the same. I find communion is frequent in Provence; to my shame be it spoken, I neglected the Immaculate Conception of the Mother, to reserve myself wholly for the Nativity of the Son; for this we cannot be too well prepared. But here comes the Marquis, from his high station; I was beginning to sing:

Le héros que j'attends, ne reviendra-t-il pas [1]?

Here, then, he is, and I resign my pen to him.

[1] Will the hero I expect, never return? [Translation.]

The Marquis DE GRIGNAN *also writes to his Mother.*
(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *Letter.*)

I am just returned from Versailles, Madame, where I went on Sunday; I immediately waited on Maréchal de Lorges, and desired him to present me to the King, which he promised to do, and appointed to meet me at the door of Madame de Maintenon's apartment, to salute him upon his return. I accordingly saluted him: he stopped, bowed his head to me, and smiled. The next day I saluted the Dauphin, the Dauphiness, MONSIEUR, MADAME, and the other Princes of the blood, in their respective apartments, and I everywhere met with a gracious reception. I dined with Madame d'Armagnac, who paid me a thousand attentions, and loaded me with a thousand remembrances to you. From thence I went to M. de Montausier's, where I stayed till the play began. The performance was *Andromache*, which was quite new to me; judge, Madame, of the pleasure I received from it. At night I went to the supper, and then to bed; and the next day, which was yesterday, to the levees: I passed the rest of the morning at the Public Offices, and at M. Charpentier's; I dined with M. de Montausier; and after dinner I waited upon Madame d'Armagnac, from thence went to *Sertorius*; and spent the remainder of the day in the same manner as the preceding one. I was this morning at the levees: after which, M. de La Trousse took me to M. de Louvois, who told me to think of my corps. I told him it was complete, and M. de La Trousse added, that it was a very fine one. This, Madame, is a true account of what passed at Versailles. Permit me, in looking at your portrait, to lament, that I cannot throw myself at the feet of the original, kiss both her hands, and aspire to one of her cheeks.

LETTER 825

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, December 17, 1688.

I began this letter early in the morning, and shall finish it to-night, if the post-boy thinks proper to come at a reasonable hour: in a word, I shall imitate the Chevalier. We have a great desire to see your answer respecting the *blue ribbon*, which must certainly have been an agreeable surprise to you. We find you are the only Provincial Governors who are distinguished upon this occasion; for the brother of the Lady of Honour who is a favourite, and an Ambassador, had higher pretensions than you[1]. The rest of the Commanders are warriors; all others are quite forgotten. But, alas, my dear love, how distant we are from each other! a whole fortnight have we been expecting this answer. M. de Lamoignon is going to spend the holidays at Bâville; he took me last night to sup with him at the Chevalier's. M. Amelot, who is returned from Portugal, and is going into Switzerland, without having had time scarcely to breathe, supped there also; Coulanges was there; your health was drank all round, and your absence regretted; you would not be forgotten here, even if I were not present. The Duchesse du Lude is somewhat indisposed; she is troubled with a vomiting; she keeps her room, and talks of you continually. Madame de Coulanges, and the *Divinities*, are employed in diverting the Abbé Têtu's vapours, which are very strong, and deprive him of sleep: M. du Bois, who is a very skillful physician, prescribes also for the Abbé; he returns you a thousand thanks for your obliging remembrance of him. I yesterday returned a thousand visits I had received in our neigh-

[1] The Comte de Grignan, Lieutenant-General in the government of Provence and the King's army, did not serve after the year 1670, except upon the frontiers, where he commanded in the absence of M. de Vendôme.

bourhood, on the score of your Knighthood; among others, to M. de Richebourg, who adores you, and Madame de Maisons, who is quite a Grignan. The Marquis had been with her, and had entertained her highly; he is very polite, and I am grieved you cannot see him.

The Chevalier is embarrassed at his great reputation; he is held up as a model, both with respect to life and manners; his friends are proud of him. He dragged himself yesterday to M. de Paris's, and told him he had made an effort to come to him, in order to undeceive the world concerning the false reports about M. de Beauvilliers: he covered his face with his hand, and said seriously what he thought; but his hand could not conceal his tears. He intends performing the same office on Sunday for M. de Dangeau [1]. He will inform you to-night of all you have to do. I always recur to the maxim, *whatever is good, is good*; according to this balance, no one loses or gains: all people are made acquainted with themselves, which embarrasses not a few. Songs and lampoons fly about in abundance, but I pay no attention to them; however, I must tell you what the Comtesse [2] said aloud at MADEMOISELLE's the other day.

Le Roi, dont la bonté le met à mille épreuves,
Pour soulager les chevaliers nouveaux,
En a dispensé vingt de porter des manteaux,
Et trente de faire leurs preuves [3].

This is all very well. Madame de Vaubecourt, like you, has gained her cause with triumph. M. de Broglio has superseded La Trousse in the command of Languedoc; but it is expected that his predecessor will be better provided for: the expenses he incurred in this Province, will oblige his successor to button-up pretty closely. I tell

[1] These were the formalities necessary to the admission of Knights of the Order. It is evident that the way in which she speaks of M. de Beauvilliers is a mere jest.

[2] The Comtesse de Fiesque.

[3] The King, whose goodness exposes him to a thousand trials, in order to relieve the new Knights, has excused twenty from wearing their cloaks, and thirty from proving their nobility. [Translation.]

you nothing, my dear child, but trifles; I leave subjects of importance to the Chevalier, content at being as much interested as himself, in everything that concerns you, to sit by the chimney-corner, and chat with him about you, to wish that your Avignon business may turn out well, and that your journey may be useful. There was such a noise the day before yesterday, as I was concluding my letter, that I could not tell you half of what I had to say to you; and it is lucky that I love you three days successively, to be able to resume the thread of my discourse in the same key.

The Duc de Coislin has come again, to desire the Chevalier to be a witness for him, and the Bishop of Orléans [1] also: in short, his approbation must be obtained at all events. It will not be surprising next month, to see two Knights of the *blue ribbon* fighting: there is a fine number of them. This is enough, my dear child, till night. You are not mistaken with respect to Sappho's [2] poetry; your taste is good, and will always be so; and mine too is good, to love and esteem you as I do.

I have just returned from the city. I have been to thank Madame de Meckelbourg for her civilities, and Madame d'Elbeuf for her visit: you drew these obligations upon me. I have heard nothing new. The affairs in England do not change their aspect daily. Your letters have not yet arrived. As you find my affection for you does not vary between Wednesday and Friday; in like manner, neither does it change between morning and night: so, my dear child, I am wholly yours, and I conjure you to love me always as you do now.

Ah! here comes your letter of the nineteenth. I acknowledge I expected it with impatience: I longed to know, if your joy and sentiments kept pace with ours; thank God, I find they do. Indeed, you ought to be satisfied; all the compliments that are paid you, are calculated to

[1] Pierre de Cambout de Coislin, Bishop of Orléans, then first Almoner to the King, afterwards Cardinal and Great Almoner of France.

[2] Mademoiselle de Scuderi.

please and flatter you. Madame de Lavardin says, that she loves you too well, to say anything in form. In fact, everyone, whether speaking or silent, is on your side. You are mistaken, if you think the promotion is no longer thought of; everything is in as much agitation as ever, and the affairs of England afford only a slight diversion; the nearer the ceremony approaches, the more active are the preparations. M. de Charost was on the road, and was ordered twenty leagues farther off. None who command in the Provinces will return: judge then if the most distant, and the only one in Provence, will do so; make yourself easy, the favour is complete. Whatever trouble my son-in-law may occasion me, by the compliments I receive on his account, I should be very sorry to be in Brittany; I have had too much pleasure from all that I have heard and seen with respect to this business. I accept your compliments, my dear Comtesse; you cannot be more interested than I am.

LETTER 826

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, December 20, 1688.

Is it possible, my dearest child, that I write well? my pen flies rapidly; but since you are contented, I ask no more. You will, with a little patience, obtain all you desire. M. de Grignan will not come, and the King will send you the *blue ribbon*, with the Cross at the end. If the absentees are created Knights by proxy, as it is said they will, the Archbishop (of Arles) will be requested to personate his dear nephew: if not, it will take place upon your first journey, and you will have the *blue ribbon* in the meantime. In short, you will do as the rest do, and you will receive instructions.

How do you and M. d'Aix agree? He has bestowed so many praises upon me, by your account, that I dare

not tell you, I wish he may not be displeased with you all. But you know, and so does the Coadjutor, how much the bickerings of the Provinces are in general detested here: we call them *picking of lobsters*. As to your son, the Chevalier endeavours to make him a man with a head, pointing out to him the great inconvenience of being without one. It will not be our fault, if he does not learn in your absence all he was ignorant of before; and, in the meantime, he is not the less kissed and caressed, for it is his fate to be beloved. I supped last night at the Duchesse du Lude's, where I met Madame de Coulanges, the first President of the Court of Aids, and Maréchal de Créqui's lady. The last, I must acknowledge, gave me pleasure by telling me, after paying you several compliments, that your son had acquired great honour in this last campaign; that she knew it from a quarter that could not be suspected; and that he had not only distinguished himself for valour and coolness, but for prudence, having withdrawn from certain gay parties, without pretending to be a Cato, or making himself disliked; and that these were admirable prognostics: she congratulated us both; these praises, supported by a person who is not addicted to flattery, appeared to me worthy of being communicated to you.

A Chapter of the Widows was held yesterday, at Madame de Lavardin's, when we admitted Mademoiselle de La Rochefoucauld to be a Member, as I have told you. It seems as if we met only to talk of you, and celebrate you. You are acquainted with the solidity of Madame de Lavardin's reasoning. We joined issue upon the subject in debate, that everyone should keep his place, the great without being degraded, and the others without being elevated.

M. de Grignan is in the right to exult at the praises I have given him on his son's first campaign. But he is not yet acquainted with his full value—never did he judge more wisely; but why should he suppose my eulogiums to be ironical? what! does he think me incapable of observing the excellence of his judgment in this instance, as well as

in every other? I complain in my turn, and till this quarrel can be settled, I embrace him with all my heart. This is what spoils him; for, notwithstanding so many storms and tempests, we love him still.

Madame de Broglio thinks she is going to live with you, because she is going into Languedoc. We are not yet acquainted with the destiny of La Trousse, but we have no uneasiness upon that score; he will be the handsomest of the Knights; I shall see him at his own house. If M. de Grignan had assisted at the ceremony, I should have wished to have seen him, to have been a witness of his elegant deportment.

The King of England is constantly betrayed, even by his own officers: M. de Lauzun is the only person who has not deserted him. A Parliament will be convened, and it is hoped that two thirds will oppose the Prince of Orange. The little Prince is hitherto safe at Portsmouth. What say you to this English nation?

LETTER 827

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, December 22, 1688.

You have made so lively an impression upon our hearts, my dear child, and all our thoughts and actions turn so constantly upon you, and as you said, we are so assembled in your name, that we can scarcely support the idea of not seeing the dear Comtesse enter, whom we so passionately love: I speak for the community; for your son feels keenly your absence, and the misfortune of not beholding you. I incessantly tell him to avail himself of the real happiness of having such an uncle as the Chevalier; we have very useful conversations with him. When sometimes he is absent, or asks misplaced questions, he reminds me of the Fable of the Cat metamorphosed into a woman: she sprung away sometimes when she saw a

mouse; so the Marquis, who is a man, shows sometimes that he is a child; and seriously he should now be entered at the Academy? examine his conduct, and you must own he is very much altered, and very much improved. I embrace him very often, and make you the pretext; for I sometimes take him by surprise, and explain to him the reason. Madame de La Fayette, to whom his uncle introduced him, is delighted with him. I shall take him to Madame de Lavardin's, who, from an excess of love and esteem, will not pay you any compliments; those who compliment you, love you too: all is well.

You will have your instructions, and *the ribbon* and *the cross*, like the rest; you will all be treated alike, whether a Knight invests you with the Order, or you are allowed to wear it before your reception; only have a little patience. The Minister's letter is not to be considered as leave of absence: in short, we should be sorry to see M. de Grignan in the present situation of affairs: for things are in such confusion with respect to England, that every one remains at his post. The interruption of our correspondence prevented you from adopting a good resolution at first. Your prelates have deserted you; I equally admire those who build, and those who do not complete their building; the latter are indeed more insufferable, not to finish what they had begun, and thus leave your house in disorder. This deprives us of patience, and gives us the gout: this gout is neither of much importance nor very painful; but it is an impertinence and a weakness that prevents our going to Versailles as much as if it were of greater consequence. We send you some verses of Madame Deshoulières, which you will like.

Sanzei[1] goes sometimes to Versailles; he takes his meals at Madame de Coulanges's; for instead of your excellent table, at which we were so well fed, we have nothing but a few crumbs collected: he will have a Lieutenancy of Dragoons: he has been in the trenches like the rest, and is satisfied. But without flattering you, the fairies have

[1] He was the son of one of M. de Coulanges's sisters.

whispered about everywhere the Marquis's campaign; he pleased everybody, as well by his intrepidity in danger, as by his cheerful manners and prudent conduct; there is but one opinion upon this subject. This contusion was the last gift of the last fairy, for it gave a finishing stroke to the whole; and may properly be called the bird's wing, or the stag's foot. M. d'Avaux [1] must have arrived. The Abbé de Guénégaud wept for Madame de Mesmes, before he began to stammer. Madame de St.-Géran [2] is brought to bed of a little girl; this was not worth the trouble.

LETTER 828

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, December 24, 1688.

The Marquis has been to Versailles alone, where he conducted himself extremely well; he dined with M. du Maine at M. de Montausier's; supped at Madame d'Armagnac's; paid his court at all the levees and all the couchees. The Dauphin ordered him the wax candle-stick; in short, he is thrown into the world, and he acts his part well. He is in fashion, and never had any one so fortunate an introduction, nor so high a reputation, for I should never make an end, were I to tell you of all who speak well of him. I am inconsolable to think you have not the pleasure of seeing and embracing him, as I do every day.

But does it not seem, while I am chatting to you with so much tranquillity, as if I had nothing to communicate? Listen, listen, I say, to a piece of news that is scarcely worth the trouble of relating. The Queen of England and the Prince of Wales, with his nurse and a single ser-

[1] Jean-Antoine de Mesmes, Comte d'Avaux, afterwards appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to James II. of England; he had just returned from his Embassy from Holland.

[2] Françoise-Madeleine-Claude de Warignies, Comtesse de Saint-Géran, lay in for the first time of a daughter, after a marriage of twenty-one years.

vant to rock his cradle, are expected here to-morrow. The King has sent his carriages to meet them upon the road to Calais, where the Queen arrived on Tuesday last, the twenty-first instant, accompanied by M. de Lauzun. M. Courtin, who is just returned from Versailles, gave us the following account yesterday at Madame de La Fayette's. You know that M. de Lauzun resolved about six weeks ago to go over to England; he could not better employ his leisure, and he did not desert the King of England while everyone else betrayed or abandoned him. In short, on Sunday last, the nineteenth of this month, the King, who had formed his plan, went to bed with the Queen, as usual, dismissed those who still serve him, and rose an hour after to order a valet-de-chambre to introduce a man whom he would find at the door of the ante-chamber; this was M. de Lauzun. The King said to him, "I intrust you with the care of the Queen and my son: you must risk everything, and endeavour to conduct them to France." M. de Lauzun thanked him, as you may suppose; but he desired to take a gentleman of Avignon with him, of the name of St.-Victor, known to possess great courage and merit. St.-Victor took the little Prince under his cloak; he was said to be at Portsmouth, when he lay concealed in the palace. M. de Lauzun presented his hand to the Queen; think what a leave taking hers must have been with the King; and, accompanied by the two women I have mentioned to you, they went into the street, and took a hackney coach. They afterwards sailed down the river in a little boat, where they experienced such a tempest, that they knew not what would become of them. At length, at the mouth of the Thames, they went on board a yacht, M. de Lauzun standing by the master, intending, if he proved a traitor, to throw him into the sea. But as he supposed he had only common passengers on board, which was most frequently the case, he carelessly sailed through fifty Dutch ships, who did not even notice this little bark; and thus protected by heaven, and sheltered from the threatened danger, she landed safely at Calais, where M. de Charost received the

Queen with all the respect imaginable. The courier, who brought the news yesterday at noon to the King, related all these particulars; and at the same time orders were sent to dispatch the King's carriages to meet this Queen, and conduct her to Vincennes, which is fitting up for her. It is said the King will join her upon the road. This is the first volume of the romance, the sequel you shall have immediately. We have just been assured, that to complete the adventure, M. de Lauzun, after having put the Queen and Prince safely into the hands of M. de Charost, proposed returning to England with St.-Victor, to share the sad and miserable fate of the King. I admire M. Lauzun's planet, which will again render his name brilliant, at the very time it appeared to be sunk in oblivion. He carried twenty thousand pistoles to the King of England. This, my child, is indeed a very noble and heroic action; and what completes it is, his returning to a country where, according to all appearances, he will perish, either with the King, or by the rage into which he has thrown the people by the last stroke he has played upon them. I leave you to reflect upon this romance, and embrace you with more than common affection.

LETTER 829

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, December 27, 1688.

Do you know, that your little Captain is on the road to Châlons, to view the fine corps you have raised for him. He set out on Christmas-Day to sleep at Claie, and to pay his devoirs at Livry as he passed; he will return on Sunday. The Chevalier has limited his time; M. du Plessis is with him, still loaded with proofs of your esteem and confidence: you may be assured he is entirely devoted to you and your son, and what more can you desire? He seems to me, with his fierce cocked hat and his black cra-

vat, like the Maréchal who turned painter for love; and indeed it was his love for your family that made him turn warrior: in short, he possesses courage, boldness, and every other virtue, with which you may do as you please. So much for M. du Plessis, whose subject is exhausted; not so the Marquis: you think he is fat, but you are mistaken; on the contrary, he is more slender and shapely; he is taller; but do you suppose he can be much grown in ten weeks? So many things, my dear child, have occurred within these three months, that they appear like three years. In short, time does not gallop as it did when we were together. Soleri has given you an account of our Society, which subsists only in you and for you, for you are our true link; and this pretty portrait—but alas! it never says a word, and that grieves us: you are much handsomer than it, without flattering you. I showed the Duchesse du Lude this morning what you wrote respecting her, with which she is very much pleased; she deserved this for the remembrances she every day gives me for you. After mass, she took me with Alliot to the Abbé Têtu's: this Abbé never sleeps; he is, indeed, very ill; his disorder is more than common vapours, and we cannot behold him without pity: Madame de Coulanges and all his friends are very careful of him.

Nothing is talked of but the Queen of England; she has desired to breathe a little at Boulogne, till she receives news from the King her husband, who has escaped from England, but no one yet knows where he is. The King has sent her three coaches and six, litters, pages, footmen, guards, lieutenants, and officers. You will find all this in good Bigorre's letter. M. de Lauzun ought to be satisfied with this adventure; he has displayed sense, judgment, good management, and courage; and has at length found the road to Versailles through St. James's; this was a discovery for him alone to make. The Princesse [1] is enraged

[1] Mademoiselle de Montpensier, who had made such great sacrifices to extricate him from prison, and to restore him to the Court, had much to complain of from him. He was guilty of frequent infidelities towards her, jealous, and passionate; she quarrelled with him, drove

to think that the King is satisfied at his conduct, and that he will again return to Court.

The Chevalier talks to me on the subject respecting which you wrote to him; I conclude you wish that it should be so, as you know what confidence is in friendship. M. Coignet was for making a match the other day between your son and little de Lamoignon, to whom M. Voisin is to give one hundred thousand crowns, with a promise of something better: the Chevalier is highly pleased with the idea. M. de Mirepoix is to marry the daughter of the Duchesse de La Ferté [1] with fifty thousand crowns unpaid; this marriage was brought about nobody knows how. Madame de Mirepoix gives her son, who is a great match, to the most inconsiderate fortune at Court. I want to know what Madame du Pui-du-Fou [2] says to this.

The ceremony (*of the Knights*) is to be performed without *éclat* [3] at Versailles in the Chapel. It is to begin on Friday at vespers, is to continue on the morning of New Year's day, and to finish at vespers. The King has dispensed with the obligation of receiving the sacrament at the ceremony; he will not wear his great cloak, but the collar only: cloaks are lent, so that it is plain they are not absolutely necessary. The King is highly pleased with the manner in which M. de Monaco [4] received the Order, he has said so publicly, which embarrasses those who have refused it. It is very probable that the same messenger who carries *the ribbon* to Monaco, will take it to M. de Grignan. This seems to me to resemble our treatment of a

him from her presence, and sometimes even struck him. He began to retaliate in the same way. These scenes led to a violent and decisive rupture. It appears that the Princesse, in making her complaints against Lauzun to the King, had requested that he might never appear again at Court.

[1] Anne-Charlotte-Marie de Saint-Nectaire, or Senneterre.

[2] Madeleine de Bellièvre, Marquise du Pui-du-Fou, mother of Madeleine du Pui-du-Fou, Marquise de Mirepoix, and of Marie-Angélique du Pui-du-Fou, M. de Grignan's second wife.

[3] "The King," says Madame de La Fayette, "has a natural aversion to everything that incommodes him."

[4] He consented to take precedence as Duc de Valentinois, and not as Prince of Monaco.

dog, to whom we say "hold off" one minute, and "catch" the next. The comparison is good, but I am afraid it will bring me into a quarrel with that cavilling gentleman; he will say, I treat him like a dog. Adieu, my dearest and most excellent child; I have still a hundred things to say to you, but they would overwhelm you.

LETTER 830

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Wednesday, December 29, 1688.

This then is the dreadful Wednesday, in which you desired me to neglect my dear child; but all the consolation I receive after my fatigue, is to write and chat with her a little. I remember enough of Provence and Aix, and I know enough of the cause you have to complain of the Election (of the Consuls) which took place on St. Andrew's day, to approve of your having it annulled by the Parliament. I have seen Father Gaillard [1], who is very glad of it; he will speak to M. de Croissi, and will transfer the whole business to M. de Grignan. A more just revenge could not take place, nor by a method more effectual to correct and cure him of the whim of displeasing you. I congratulate M. Gaillard upon it; I am really flattered at the thought of having a place in so good a head; I shall never forget his looks, so full of fire and penetration. Do you not chat with him now and then?

I guess what the two months' work is that you have to perform this winter at Aix [2]: at the first glance it ap-

[1] A celebrated Jesuit, who interested himself in this affair on account of his brother M. Gaillard, a man of worth and intellect.

[2] Louvois, who had the superintendence of the royal buildings, formed a plan, to please his master, for bringing the river Eure to Versailles, where the fountains were supplied only by the fetid water of a pond. To execute this plan, the river had to be made to wind through eleven leagues; and two mountains, opposite Maintenon, had to be made to join. Thirty thousand men, from the army, were em-

pears great and difficult; but when you are accustomed to business, being every day overwhelmed with duties and writing, you will find that the days, notwithstanding their fatigue and irksomeness, fly swiftly along. I have passed some very sorrowful ones, but the progress of time has not been arrested in consequence of them: the truth is, that at the expiration of three months, we could fancy it to be three years since our separation. Believe me, you may very well remain at Aix till after Easter; Lent is not so strictly kept there as at Grignan. The north wind of Grignan, which makes you swallow the dust of all your prelates' buildings, gives me the pain in your chest, and seems to be a little camp de Maintenon. You may make what use you please of these reflections; for my part, there is nothing I so much wish, as to work with my dear child, and end my life in loving her, and receiving the tender and pious marks of her affection; for you seem to me to be *the pious Æneas* in the form of a woman.

I have seen Sanzei, and embraced him for you: he threw himself on his knees, and kissed my feet. I inform you of his extravagances, as I would of Don Quixote's. He is no longer a musketeer; he is a Lieutenant of Dragoons; he has spoken to the King, who told him, that if he were attentive to his duty, care would be taken of him. In such a situation how necessary it is to him to be *Sir*, in every sense of the word! You cannot imagine how useful this title, which made us laugh so much at first, is to your son, and how much it contributes to his reputation; in short, it is the fashion to speak well of him. Madame de Verneuil, who has returned, entered yesterday upon this subject, and afterwards paid you a thousand compliments, and sent you a thousand remembrances. I believe Madame de Coislin [1] will be Madame d'Enrichemont, at last.

ployed on this work, the greater number of whom were destroyed by sickness. The project was eventually abandoned, and has never been resumed.

[1] Madeleine-Armande du Cambout de Coislin, was married on the 10th of August following to Maximilien de Béthune, Duc de Sully and Prince d'Enrichemont.

Madame de Coulanges, whom I saw this morning at La Bagnol's, told me she had received your answer, and that she would show it me to-night at the Abbé Têtu's. You are now freed from this answer; but you make me lament that you thus reply singly to a hundred persons who have written to you: this is a sad fashion in France. But what shall I say to you of England, where the fashions and manners are still more terrible? M. de Lamoignon informed the Chevalier, that the King of England had arrived at Boulogne; another says, at Brest; a third, that he has been arrested in England; and a fourth, that he was lost in the late dreadful storm at sea: you may choose which you please. It is now seven o'clock, and the Chevalier will not close his packet till the polite hour of eleven; if he hears anything more to be depended upon, he will inform you of it. It is very certain that the Queen will not quit Boulogne till she receives some news from her husband; she weeps and prays incessantly. The King was yesterday very uneasy respecting His Britannic Majesty. Here is a wide field before us; we are very attentive to the will of the Gods,

> Et nous voulons apprendre
> Ce qu'ils ont ordonné du beau-père et du gendre [1].

I resume my letter, having just returned from the Chevalier's apartment. Never was such a day as this known; four different reports are spread concerning the King of England, and all from authentic quarters. He is at Calais; he is at Boulogne; he is in custody in England; he is cast away; nay, according to a fifth, he is at Brest; and all the rumours are so blended, that there is no knowing what to think. M. Courtin relates one account, M. de Rheims another, and M. de Lamoignon a third. The footmen are incessantly going and coming: I must therefore take my leave of my dear child, without

[1] And we wish to know how they have disposed of the father-in-law and the son-in-law. [Translation.] See *La Mort de Pompée*: a tragedy of Corneille's.

being able to tell her anything certain, except that I love her as her heart deserves, and my inclination prompts me; and in this career I always give the reins to my affection.

LETTER 831

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, December 31, 1688.

Per tornar dunque al nostro proposito [1], I must tell you, my child, that all the uncertainties of the day before yesterday, which seemed to be fixed by the assurances M. de Lamoignon gave us that the King of England was at Calais, are now changed into the certainty, that he is detained in England; and that if this ill fortune has not befallen him, he has perished; for he was to make his escape, and embark a few hours after the Queen: so that though we have no certain intelligence of his being arrested, there is not a single person who does not now credit it. Such is our situation; and such the way in which we are closing the present year, and entering upon that of *eighty-nine*; a year marked out by extraordinary predictions, as pregnant with great events: not one, however, will take place that is not agreeable to the order of Providence, like all our actions, and all our journeyings. We must submit to everything, and look boldly in the face of futurity; this is going a great way.

In the meanwhile, Comte, I address myself to you. Yesterday the Knights of St. Michael went through the ceremony with several of those of the Order of the Holy Ghost, at the hour I mentioned to you after vespers, and to-morrow the rest will do the same. The Chevalier will inform you how it is managed with respect to the absentees. You must make your profession of faith, and give an account of your life and manners. Of this you will be duly informed; you are not the only one; and in the mean-

[1] To return then to our proposition. [Translation.]

time *hold off, fair and softly.* Yesterday M. de Chevreuse, of the Order of St. Michael, passed before M. de La Rochefoucauld, who said to him, "Sir, you pass before me, which you have no right to do." M. de Chevreuse replied, "Sir, I have a right, for I am Duc de Luynes." "Oh, Sir," rejoined the other, "in this respect I yield to you." The *Gazette* will inform you, my dear Comte, that M. de Luynes has given this Duchy to his son, with the King's permission; and M. de Chevreuse, who will henceforward be called M. de Luynes, the Duchy of Chevreuse to his son, who will be styled Duc de Montfort. Your son's comrades are highly distinguished by titles. It is said that some troops are to be sent into Brittany with M. de Momont, Major-General, to be under the command of M. de Chaulnes; there will be encampments in all the Provinces. You need only refer to the map, to judge whether we have occasion to be on our guard on all sides: cast your eyes for a moment over all Europe. Madame de Barillon is very uneasy respecting her husband [1]; but it is said at random, for no letters arrive, that he is safe, though the Chapel of the King of England has been pulled down, as well as that belonging to the Ambassador's household; time will clear up all this.—But who am I speaking to? is it still to this Comte? My dear child, your good lady, who swore she would not touch a card till the King of England had won a battle, will not probably play again for a long time; poor woman! the Prince of Orange is in London—this is still the subject of my letter, as it is of all conversation, for everyone considers himself as concerned in this great scene. The Queen is still in a convent at Boulogne, always in tears at the absence of her husband, whom she passionately loves.

Madame de Brinon is quite forgotten. A new comedy is said to be in rehearsal, which is to be represented at St.-Cyr, and is called *Esther.* The carnival does not promise to be very gay. My son's letters are constantly filled with the most affectionate sentiments for you and M. de

[1] M. de Barillon was the French Ambassador in England.

Grignan. We expect your letters, but probably shall not answer them till Monday. The Chevalier and I have very long conversations about you; he is tolerably well, and when your son returns from Châlons, he intends to accompany him to Versailles. The good Corbinelli exhausts his rhetoric upon the present situation of affairs, and at the same time adores you. Adieu, my lovely child; I embrace you a thousand times, and wish you a Happy Year in that of 1689.

*LETTER 832

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, January 3, 1689.

Your dear son arrived this morning. We were delighted to see him and M. du Plessis: we were at dinner when they came, and they ate very heartily of our repast, which was already somewhat impaired. Oh that you could have heard all the Marquis said of the beauty of his corps! He first asked if the corps had arrived; and on the question, whether it was a fine one, this was the answer he received: "Indeed, Sir, it is; it is one of the finest that ever was seen; *it is an old corps*, and more to be prized than the *new ones*." You may guess the effect such an encomium must have on a person who was not known to be the Captain. Our boy was in raptures the next day at the sight of his noble corps mounted: the men, made on purpose, as it were, and selected by you, and the horses cast in the same mould, gave him such high spirits, that M. de Châlons [1] and Madame de Noailles (his mother) entered into his feelings of joy. He has been received by these pious persons as the son of M. de Grignan: but why do I tell you all this? it is the Marquis's business.

I was on the point of making some enquiry respect-

[1] Louis-Antoine de Noailles, Bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne, afterwards Archbishop and Cardinal of Paris.

ing Madame d'Oppède, and you anticipate my curiosity; I fancy she proves a valuable addition to your society, and perhaps the only good companion you have. As to M. d'Aix, I confess I would not give credit to what the Provençals say of him; I recollect that they are made up of gossiping, which constitutes the whole business of their lives, and that they talk merely for the sake of employment. Neither must M. d'Aix be implicitly believed: and yet how can we think that a man, who has been *all his life a courtier*, and who swears by everything sacred, that he cares not for the intrigues of Consuls, would dishonour himself before God and man by perjury? But you are the person to judge, being upon the spot.

The installation of your Brother-Knights took place at Versailles on New Year's day. Coulanges is returned from thence; he gives you a thousand thanks for your pretty letter. I admire every thought that occupies your pen, and how justly and happily it is turned. He told me the ceremony began on Friday, as I informed you: the first installed were professors, with their magnificent habits and collars. Saturday was fixed for the two Maréchals of France: the Maréchal de Bellefonds made himself completely ridiculous, as either to avoid parade, or from carelessness, he had neglected to put *ribbons* to his breeches, by which means they left him almost bare. The whole troop was magnificent; M. de La Trousse the most so; but by some accident his wig was discomposed, and turned almost round, so that one side of his head was bald; he kept tugging, without being able to remove the inconvenience, which did not a little disconcert him. But M. de Montchevreuil and M. de Villars so completely entangled themselves; their swords, *ribbons*, lace, and spangles were so mixed, jumbled, confounded, and all the little crooked particles so completely interwoven [1]; that it was not in the power of man to separate them, and the more this was attempted the more entangled they became, like

[1] Allusion to the crooked atoms which, according to Epicurus, form the elementary parts of matter, and of the generality of beings.

the rings of Rogero's [1] arms. In short, the whole ceremony, the bows, and all the proceedings, were interrupted; it was necessary to separate them by force, and the strongest gained the day. But the most ridiculous scene of all, which entirely destroyed the gravity of the ceremony, was the carelessness of good M. de Hocquincourt, who, having dressed himself in the manner of the Provençals and the Bretons, his breeches fitting him less commodiously than those he usually wore, his shirt would not be confined in them, in spite of all he could do; for, knowing its situation, he was continually endeavouring to adjust it properly, but without success; at length the Dauphiness could no longer refrain from bursting into a loud laugh: the King's Majesty was almost shaken, and in all the archives of the Order, no precedent of such an adventure can be found; it was completely ridiculous. It is certain, my dear child, that if my son-in-law had been present at this ceremony, I should have been there too; there was plenty of room, many having supposed they should be stifled, which was the case at the Carrousel. The next day the Court was dazzled with *blue ribbons*; young men with fine figures wear them over their coats, the others underneath. You would have had your choice, at least with respect to shape. I am told that the absent Knights will be ordered to wear the ribbon the King sends them with the Cross. This

[1] Ariosto represents the handsome Rogero at the moment when, having delivered Angélique, who was naked, and on the point of being devoured, like Andromeda, by a sea-monster, the young warrior hastened to lay aside his armour to reward himself for his valour by her charms. In his eagerness he made more knots than he untied. It is thus he draws this charming picture:

> Frettoloso, or da questo or da quel canto,
> Confusamente l'arme si levava.
> Non gli parve altra volta mai star tanto;
> Che seun laccio sciogliea, due n'annodava.
>
> And now the glowing youth with eager haste
> Impatient from his limbs the steel unbrac'd;
> By turns this plate, confus'd, then that he tried,
> And while he loosen'd one, another tied.
>
> *Orlando Furioso*, Hoole's Translation, *Book x.*

the Chevalier is to communicate to you. So much for the Chapter of *blue ribbons*.

The King of England was taken, it is said, in a hunting dress, endeavouring to make his escape. He is at Whitehall. He has an officer, and his guards, and his Lords in Waiting; but this is kept very secret. The Prince of Orange is at St. James's, which is on the other side of the park. The Parliament is to be assembled: God conduct this bark. The Queen of England will be here on Wednesday; she comes to St.-Germain to be near the King and his bounty.

The Abbé Têtu is still an object of compassion; opium has seldom any effect upon him; if he sleeps a little, it is merely because the dose is doubled. I give your compliments to everyone to whom you send them. The Widows are devoted to you upon earth, and in the third heaven. On New Year's day I was at Madame Croiset's; I there met Rubentel, who spoke highly of your son, of his growing reputation, his good disposition, and his prowess at Philisbourg. It is said, that M. de Lauzun was three quarters of an hour with the King; if this continues, you may easily guess who will be glad to see him again.

*LETTER 833

From Madame DE GRIGNAN *to the Comte* DE BUSSY [1].

Aix, January 4, 1689.

I should have been, at least, as glad to have seen your name, Sir, among those of the Knights of the Order, as you were to see M. de Grignan's there; and I should not have been more uneasy respecting your claims, than you were respecting his. I assure you, Sir, that it is with real

[1] This letter is the answer to one in which he congratulated her on the favour obtained by her husband. It is not particularly interesting, but we have so few of this lady's letters, that we should have reproached ourselves if we had omitted it.

concern, I find you are not one of those who have been honoured with this dignity, though you have been so long a Lieutenant-General in the army. I ought to feel thus, in gratitude for your joy at our good fortune. But I have no need of this stimulus, the interest I take in all that concerns you being sufficient. What you tell me of your submission, in your adversity, to the decrees of Providence, and of the use you make on these occasions of your philosophy and religion, appears to me so worthy and estimable, that I doubt whether it would not be more reasonable to congratulate you upon these, than on all the transient favours that the world can bestow. As this, however, is not customary, I will content myself with applauding and admiring you, and will reserve my compliments for the favour the King has granted to your sons. I should have done this sooner, if I had known it, but I am at the extremity of the globe, and the situation of Provence is but too well calculated to justify me to all those who do not hear from me, at a time when they know I would not be silent. Think me not, therefore, the less sensible to your interests, since no one can honour you more highly than I do.

LETTER 834

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, January 5, 1689.

I took the Marquis with me yesterday; we began by visiting M. de La Trousse, who was so obliging as to put on the dresses of the novice and professor, as on the ceremonial day; these two habits set off a fine figure to advantage. A foolish thought, without considering consequences, made me regret that the fine shape of M. de Grignan had not shone upon this occasion. The page's dress is very becoming; and I am not at all surprised that the Princesse de Clèves should fall in love with M. de Nemours and his

handsome legs [1]. The mantle has all the magnificence of royalty; it cost La Trousse eight hundred pistoles, for he purchased it. After having viewed this pretty masquerade, I took your son to all the ladies in the neighbourhood. Madame de Vaubecourt and Madame Ollier received him with great politeness; he will soon pay visits upon his own account.

The *Life of St.-Louis* has induced me to read *Mézerai*; I was willing to take a view of the last Kings of the second race, and I want to unite Philippe de Valois with King Jean: this is an admirable period of history, upon which the Abbé de Choisi has written a book that may be read with interest. We endeavour to beat into your son's head, the necessity of being a little acquainted with what has passed before his time; and it will have effect: but, in the meanwhile, there are many reasons for paying attention to what is passing at present. You will see by the news of to-day, how the King of England escaped from London, apparently with the consent of the Prince of Orange. Politicians reason upon this subject, and ask if it be more advantageous for this King to be in France; some say "Yes," because he is here in security, and will not run the risk of being compelled to give up his wife and child, or lose his head; others say "No," because he leaves the Prince of Orange to enjoy the Protectorship, and be adored, having made his way to it naturally, and without blood-shed. It is certain, that war will soon be declared against us, or perhaps, even we may declare it first. If we make peace in Italy and Germany, we may apply ourselves with greater attention to the English and Dutch war; this is to be hoped, for it would be too much to have enemies on all sides. You see whither my rambling pen leads me; but you may easily suppose, that all conversations turn upon these great events.

I conjure you, my dear child, when you write to M. de Chaulnes, to tell him you enter into the obligations he has conferred upon my son, and thank him for them; that

[1] Allusion to Madame de La Fayette's Romance.

the great distance between you does not render you insensible to your brother's welfare: the subject of this acknowledgment is somewhat new; it is to excuse him from commanding the first regiment of militia, which he is raising in Brittany. My son cannot endure the idea of returning into the service in such a manner; he is shocked at it, and desires only to be forgotten in his own country. This sentiment meets the approbation of the Chevalier, and mine also I confess; do you not approve it too, my dear child? I always consider your opinion of great importance, and your judgment good, particularly with regard to your brother. Do not enter into particulars; but say in general terms, what pleases the brother, must give satisfaction to the sister. M. de Momont is gone into Brittany with troops, but in such subjection to M. de Chaulnes, that it is quite wonderful. The beginning is pleasant, we must attend to the sequel.

I met Choiseul yesterday with his *ribbon*, he is very well; we must be greatly out of luck, not to meet five or six every day. Did I tell you that the King has taken away the communion from the ceremony? This I have long wished [1]; I place the beauty of this action almost upon a par with that of abolishing duelling. Consider, in fact, what would have been the consequence of blending this holy act with the immoderate mirth excited by M. de Hocquincourt's shirt [2]. Many, however, performed their devotions, but without ostentation, and without being compelled. We are preparing for the reception of their Britannic Majesties, who are expected at St.-Germain. The Dauphiness will take precedence of this Queen, because, though not a Queen, she is the representative of one. My child, I am constantly wishing for you, constantly regretting your absence; I see all your engagements, know all your reasons; but I cannot habituate myself to the idea of not finding you, where you would be so necessary; this

[1] As a good Jansenist, Madame de Sévigné every where disapproves frequent communion.

[2] See Letter 832, of January 3, 1689, in this volume.

reflection often grieves me. This is a very unimportant letter; do not trouble yourself to answer it; be careful of your health, and your lungs.

*LETTER 835

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, January 6, (*The day of Kings*), 1689.

I begin, my dear cousin, by wishing you a Happy Year, which is the same thing as wishing you the continuance of your Christian philosophy, for this it is which constitutes true happiness. I cannot understand how it is possible to have a moment's peace in this world, without looking to God and his will, to which we must from necessity submit. With this support, a support with which we cannot dispense, we find strength and courage to endure the greatest misfortunes. I wish you, therefore, my dear cousin, the continuance of this blessing, for, be assured, it is one: it is not in ourselves we find resources. I will not, however, recall to mind what you ought to have been, and are not: my friendship for you, and regard for myself, have suffered but too much; let us think no more of this. It is the will of God, and I subscribe to all you say upon the subject. The Court is full of *blue ribbons*; we can pay no visits without meeting four or five at a house. This ornament could not have come more opportunely, to show respect to the King and Queen of England, who are to arrive to-day at St.-Germain, not, as it was reported, at Vincennes. This day will truly be the Feast of Kings [1], very agreeable to him who protects and serves for a refuge, and very melancholy to him who is in need of an asylum. These are grand objects, and grand subjects for meditation and conversation. The politicians have much to say. There is no doubt that the Prince of Orange suffered the King to escape, in order to render

[1] The day of the Epiphany, or Twelfth-day.

himself master of England, without the weight of a crime on his conscience; and the King, on his side, was in the right to leave the country, rather than risk his life with a Parliament who killed the late King his father, though he was of their religion. These are such extraordinary events, that it is difficult to conjecture how they will terminate, particularly when we cast our eyes over Europe, and view its state and disposition. The same Providence which over-rules all, will unravel all; we are only blind and ignorant spectators. Adieu; I embrace you, and my dear niece, whom I pity for being obliged to have recourse to bleeding on account of her eyes. Here, my dear Corbinelli, take my pen.

M. DE CORBINELLI *also writes to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *Letter.*)

I begin, Sir, like Madame de Sévigné, by wishing you a Happy Year; in other words, health of body, and peace of mind:

——Mens sana in corpore sano,

as Juvenal says, who understands all the comforts of life. I was angry, not to see you in the list of the Knights of the Order; an arrangement God had made in the world without my knowledge, and without my consent, that is, which I would have changed if I could. This sort of philosophy exempts all secondary causes from my imprudent wrath, and makes me submit in an instant to everything that happens to my friends or to myself. I say the same of the flight of the King of England with his whole family. I interrogate the Almighty, and ask him, if he abandons the Catholic religion, by suffering the Prince of Orange to prosper, who is the Protector of the Protestants; and then I cast my eyes to the ground. Adieu, Sir; adieu, Madame de Coligny, to whom I wish a sufficient stock of Christian philosophy, to enable her to be perfectly

indifferent to all worldly concerns: a state capable of making us Kings, and more truly Kings than those who bear the name.

LETTER 836

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, January 7, 1689.

I received your letter a day later than usual; I expect to hear from you again to-day, but as the post does not come in till late, we shall not answer you till Sunday or Monday. You write so well, my dear child, when you have no particular subject, that I am as well pleased with these epistles, as with those which are replies to mine. In short, my heart finds no relief but this during your absence; I am in the same situation as you, counting the immensity of time since your departure: three months seem as many years; not from my having seen such a variety of objects as you, but from the different thoughts, occupations, and uneasinesses, which have supplied the place of objects. I have regretted, and still regret, you daily; how, indeed, can I give up the sight and society of my dear child, after having been so long and so agreeably accustomed to them? That fatal day of Charenton is still fresh and lively in my remembrance. You had made an appointment with me at the Chevalier's, which I did not fail to attend; but you did not come; your portrait was a poor substitute. I am now in his apartment; he has had pains in his right hand all the night, and they still continue. He supped the evening before Twelfth-night with M. de Lamoignon, and was in high spirits; and in the night he was seized with this disorder, which is very lamentable. He is daily forming plans for going to Versailles, and scarcely ever able to execute them: it is a misfortune both for you and for him, that he is prevented from going to a place where he would make so good a figure, and be so useful

to his family and his nephew. He is possessed of patience and resignation, which Corbinelli boasts of having taught him. We seldom see this Corbinelli; his friends take him away, and I let him go through friendship for him, for we are considerate. He sometimes sups with us; he is very good company, and returns you a thousand thanks for having mentioned his name; yours is more strongly impressed on his mind than any other. We do not see the Abbé Bigorre so often as we wish; he will send you a whole sheet to-night. When the subject is the arrival of the King and Queen of England, and the Prince of Wales, with the particulars of the gracious, humane, and affectionate reception the King gave these Princes, you may guess that the paper will be filled.

I am impatient to hear that you have received your *ribbon*. M. Le Grand, M. de Dangeau, M. de Châtillon, M. de La Rongère, wore theirs, in compliment to the Queen of England, when they waited upon her: she will find our Court very brilliant with this new ornament. I took your son yesterday to Madame de Lavardin's, who received him as her grandson, for she loves you like a daughter: from thence we went to Madame de La Fayette's, where we met M. de Villars [1], looking a perfect *Orondates*; I informed him of all you desired me to tell him. I suppose there will be many balls this winter at Versailles.

Madame de Ricouart is a widow: she is still in the country, I shall see her upon her return; shall I give your compliments to her? The omission is sometimes better than the presentation; for instance, Madame de Lavardin always told me, that she sent no compliments to you: I have found many persons of this way of thinking, who do not wish to offend you; you may therefore believe on my word of honour, that all is well, and that those who do not overwhelm you with ceremony, are more agreeable

[1] Pierre, Marquis de Villars, father of the late Maréchal Duc of that name, was known in the world by the name of *Orondates*, on account of his fine person and great courage. He had been Ambassador in Savoie, Spain, and Denmark.

than those who do; for your answers would be without number, and you have already enough of the fatigues of writing. You wish me to write to Madame de Solre[1]; good heavens, what a tax do you impose upon me! I must adopt a style that will be like putting on the buskin. Coulanges told us a very ridiculous story the other day, with great humour. He said that the Comte de Solre waited upon M. de Chauvri[2], followed by two porters, carrying two trunks, which they could with difficulty stand under; that having brought them in and set them down, he drew from out the first that was opened, an immense bundle of papers, and said to him, throwing them upon the table, "These, Sir, are the titles of thirty-seven Knights of the Golden Fleece, of my family;" that M. de Chauvri, greatly embarrassed, said to him, "Oh, Sir, there is no occasion for so many; you disorder all my papers; I shall not know where to find the titles of Mr. such a one, and those of Mr. such a one, whose names are not at all like yours;" that M. de Chauvri entreated him to produce no more papers; but that the Comte de Solre, paying no attention to him, took out another great bundle, saying, "This, Sir, is the marriage-contract of one of my grandfathers with Sabina of Bavaria." "Good God, Sir," said M. de Chauvri, "here is already more than sufficient!" M. de Solre then took up a large roll of parchment, and, with the assistance of a servant, spread it all over the room, and showed him that he descended from two crowned heads, by two different branches of his family, M. de Chauvri exclaiming all the while, "Sir, Sir, I shall never be able to find my papers again!" Coulanges acted this scene with so much drollery and humour, that, flat as it may appear on paper, the representation amused us highly. What then would you have me to say to this woman covered with Golden Fleeces? We must rejoice with the Order of the Holy Ghost, at having so great a personage among us: I will not engage to write. This may properly be called small

[1] Anne-Marie-Françoise de Bournonville, Comtesse de Solre.

[2] Genealogist of the King's Orders of Knighthood.

talk. I am with the Chevalier, who is nodding in his great chair. I seem to chat with you as much as possible; but do not take the pains to answer all this. If I were with you, I should like to afford you some consolation, in talking of your affairs, of which I so often think, and in which I am so deeply interested. In the meantime, do not please the Provençals so highly, as to break with the Archbishop and Controllers; you would gratify them too much: let truth be the result of your own inquiry; and, let them say what they will, give them to understand that you will yourself obtain an explanation from these gentlemen. Ah, how soon would the fear of being discovered make them silent! for they aim at nothing but the propagation of idle stories, without having truth or your interest at heart. If this advice be good, follow it. I thought I saw, when I was at Lambesc, that the chief pleasure of the Provençals consisted in creating misunderstandings, and making themselves busybodies. Fie, fie! lay aside these provincial and Provençal manners.

LETTER 837

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, January 10, 1689.

We often stumble upon the same ideas, my dear child; I even think that I wrote to you from *The Rocks* what you say in your last letter respecting time. I now consent that it should fly; the days have no longer anything so dear and precious for me, as I found them to contain when you were at the Carnavalet Mansion. I enjoyed, I made the most of, every hour; I treasured it as a miser does his gold; but in absence, the case is different; time cannot fly fast enough till the wished for period arrives; we hurry it along, and would willingly dispose of all the intermediate space in favour of the days to which we aspire: it is a piece

of tapestry which we are eager to finish; we are lavish of hours, and bestow them on anyone. But I own, that when I reflect on the point to which this profusion of hours and days leads me, I tremble. I am no longer certain of any, and reason presents me with the image of what I am certain to find in my way. My child, I will put an end to these reflections with you, and endeavour to turn them to my own advantage.

The Abbé Têtu is in an alarming way for want of sleep. The physicians would not answer for his intellect; he is sensible of his situation, which is an additional calamity: he is kept alive merely by opium; he seeks for diversion and amusement, and accordingly frequents public places. We want him to go to Versailles to see the King and Queen of England, and the Prince of Wales. Can there be a grander spectacle, or one more capable of affording the highest interest? It appears that the Prince of Orange favoured the King's flight. The King was sent to Exeter, where it was his intention to go; the front of his house was well guarded, and all the back-doors left open. The Prince was not inclined to sacrifice his father-in-law; he remains in London in the place of the King, without taking upon himself the title, being only desirous of restoring what he thinks the true religion, and supporting the laws of the country, without spilling a drop of blood: this is precisely the reverse of what we thought of him; we see him in a very different point of view. Our King however acts in a manner almost divine with respect to their Britannic Majesties; for is it not being the representative of the Almighty, to support a King banished, betrayed, and abandoned? The noble ambition of our sovereign is gratified by acting this part; he went to meet the Queen, with all his household, and a hundred coaches and six. When he perceived the Prince of Wales's carriage, he alighted and affectionately embraced him; he then ran to the Queen, who was by this time alighted; he saluted her, talked with her some time, placed her at his right hand in his carriage, and presented the Dauphin and

MONSIEUR to her, who were also in the carriage, and conducted her to St.-Germain, where she found everything prepared for her like a Queen, all sorts of apparel, and a rich casket containing six thousand louis-d'ors. The King of England was expected the next day at St.-Germain, where the King waited for him; he arrived late: His Majesty went to the end of the guard-room to meet him; the King of England made an inclination, as if to embrace his knees, but the King prevented him, and embraced him three or four times very cordially. They talked together in a low voice for nearly a quarter of an hour; the King presented the Dauphin and MONSIEUR to him, the Princes of the blood, and Cardinal de Bonzi. He conducted him to the Queen's apartment, who could scarcely refrain from tears; after a conversation of a few minutes His Majesty led them to the apartment of the Prince of Wales, where they again conversed for some time, and he then withdrew, not choosing to be attended back, saying to the King, "This is your house; when I come you will do the honours of it, and I will do the honours of mine when you come to Versailles." The next day, which was yesterday, the Dauphiness went there with all the Court. I know not how they regulated the chairs, for they had those belonging to the Queen of Spain; and the Queen-Mother of England was treated as a daughter of France; I shall hereafter send you these particulars. His Majesty sent the King of England ten thousand louis-d'ors; the latter looks old and fatigued; the Queen is thin, with fine black eyes swelled with weeping; a fine complexion, but rather pale; a large mouth, beautiful teeth, a fine figure, and a great share of sense; no wonder if with all these she pleases everyone who beholds her. Here is matter for general conversation, that will not soon be exhausted.

The poor Chevalier can neither write nor go to Versailles, which grieves us sadly, as he has a thousand things to do there; but he is not ill: on Saturday he supped with Madame de Coulanges, Madame de Vauvineux, M. de Duras, and your son, at the Lieutenant's, where the healths

of the first and second were drank, that is to say, Madame de La Fayette's and yours, for you have yielded to the date of friendship. Yesterday Madame de Coulanges gave a very pretty supper to the gouty gentlemen, the Abbé de Marsillac, the Chevalier de Grignan, and M. de Lamoignon, whose nephritic complaints stood him in stead of the gout: his wife and the *Divinities* were admitted in consequence of colds which they are never without; I, in consideration of the rheumatism I had twelve years ago, and Coulanges, for deserving to have the gout. There was no scarcity of conversation; the little man sang, and gave the Abbé de Marsillac great pleasure, which he expressed by his admiration, and by imitating the tones and manners, which reminded me so strongly of his father, that I could not help being affected. Your son was at the Mesdemoiselles de Castelnau's; there is a younger sister, very pretty, and very agreeable, who is quite to your son's taste, and he leaves the squint-eyed girl to Sanzei: he took a hautboy with him, and they danced till midnight. This society is very pleasant to the Marquis, as he meets Saint-Hérem, Jeannin, Choiseul, and Ninon there; so that he is not in a foreign country. The Chevalier does not seem to be in haste to marry him, nor does M. de Lamoignon seem very desirous of marrying his daughter. We can say nothing with respect to the marriage of M. de Mirepoix [1], this is the work of M. de Montfort: people seem to be infatuated, or else their heads are turned, for they do not think as they used to do; in short, this man seems impelled by his destiny, and what can be done in such a case?

M. de Lauzun has not gone back to England: he has an apartment at Versailles, and is perfectly satisfied; he has written to MADEMOISELLE to have the honour of seeing her, which has given her great offence. I have performed a master-piece; I have been to visit Madame de Ricouart, who has lately returned, very well pleased at being a wi-

[1] Gaston-Jean Baptist de Lévis, Marquis de Mirepoix, married January 16, 1689, to Anne-Charlotte-Marie de Saint-Nectaire, daughter of Henri-François, Duc de La Ferté, and of Marie-Gabrielle-Angélique de La Mothe-Houdancourt.

dow. You have nothing to do but appoint me to complete your acknowledgments, like your romances, do you recollect? I thank the amiable Pauline for her letter, I am confident her person would please me: so she could then find no appellation for me but that of *Madame* [1]? this is being very serious. Adieu, my dear child; preserve your health, in other words, your beauty, which I so much admire.

LETTER 838

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, January 10, 1689.
Ten o'clock at night.

I have paid a visit to Madame du Pui-du-Fou upon this marriage. Madame de Montausier and Madame de Lavardin came there at the same time: I told Madame de Lavardin that you sent your remembrances to her; she has a great affection for you. The next moment a brilliant group appeared; it consisted of the Duchesse de La Ferté, leading her daughter, who is very pretty, and her little sister, dressed alike [2], the Duchesse d'Aumont [3], and M. de Mirepoix, who formed a wonderful contrast. What

[1] It must have been observed that the Marquis de Grignan followed this etiquette with his mother, which was the custom among persons of high rank, and particularly in the southern Provinces, where the Roman laws gave fathers an absolute power over their children, which inspired children with more respect than love, and exacted the forms of submission, even in the overflowings of the heart. Madame de Sévigné was averse to this false dignity, the most gloomy mask that love can assume; and it has been seen that she even laughed at her daughter, who, in speaking of her grandfather, had written to her, *Monsieur votre père.* Everyone knows the humorous speech of the great Condé, before a man who affected to say Monsieur and Madame in speaking of his relations: "Monsieur my groom, go and tell Monsieur my coachman, to put Messieurs my horses to Monsieur my coach."

[2] Catherine-Louise de St. Nectaire, married July, 1698, to François-Thibaut, Marquis de La Carte, afterwards Marquis de La Ferté.

[3] Françoise-Angélique de La Mothe-Houdancourt, elder sister of the Duchesse de La Ferté.

an uproar! what volleys of compliments flew on every side! The Duchesse was always desirous of this match with M. de Mirepoix, and threw her net accordingly. When she found that the proposal was well received, she mentioned it to the King; this brought everything to a conclusion. The King said to her, "Madame, your daughter is very young." "That is true, Sire, but the affair is urgent, because I wish M. de Mirepoix to marry her, and ten years hence, when Your Majesty is acquainted with his merit, and has recompensed it, he will want nothing more of us:" thus it was settled, and the banns are published before the articles are drawn; never were there so many *carts before horses.* Madame d'Olonne [1] was very eloquent; Madame de La Ferté brilliant: all are satisfied; Madame de Mirepoix has written to you; Madame du Pui-du-Fou [2] is drawn into the whirlwind; nobody can be heard in the hubbub. The young man had never seen his mistress; he does not know what to make of all this. My pen is good for nothing, and I wish you good night, my dear love.

LETTER 839

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, January 12, 1689.

You retired then at five o'clock in the afternoon; you drew King and Queen at dinner; you were in as good company as at Paris. It will not be my fault if the Archbishop (*of Aix*) does not know that you are satisfied with him; I informed Madame de La Fayette of this the other day, who was much pleased with the information; she enjoins you both to lay aside the spirit and way of thinking of Provence. But to come to the King and Queen of

[1] Catherine-Henriette d'Angennes, Comtesse d'Olonne, elder sister of Madeleine d'Angennes, wife of Maréchal de La Ferté.

[2] Madame de Bellièvre, Marquise du Pui-du-Fou, mother of Madame de Mirepoix.

England. It is so extraordinary to have this Court here, that it is the constant subject of conversation. The regulation of rank and precedency is to be attended to, in order to render life agreeable to those who are so unlikely to be restored. This the King said the other day, adding, that the English King was the best man in the world; that he should hunt with him; that he should come to Marly and Trianon; and that the courtiers should habituate themselves to him. The King of England does not give his hand to the Dauphin, and does not reconduct him. The Queen has not kissed MONSIEUR, who is offended at this; she said to the King, "Tell me what you wish me to do; if you would have me follow the French fashion, I will salute whom you please; but it is not the custom in England to salute anyone." She paid a visit to the Dauphiness, who was ill, and who received her in bed. No one sits in England; I believe the Duchesses will follow the French fashion, and behave to her as they did to her mother-in-law [1]. We are greatly taken up with this new Court.

In the meantime, the Prince of Orange is in London, where he has imprisoned several Lords; he is severe, and will soon make himself hated. M. de Schomberg is Commander-in-chief in Holland, in the room of this Prince, and his son is to have the reversion: so the mask is now completely thrown off.

I send you a list of the changes expected amongst the Controllers. M. de Pomereuil is to be in Brittany: God grant M. de Luxembourg may not have the command of the troops there; this would be a doleful affair for our friends [2]! We tremble at the thought of it. You know that Maréchal de Lorges is going into Guienne with St.-Ruth under him. In short, we are preparing to be upon our guard both at home and abroad. Consider how many troops, and what strength, are necessary to attend to so many things at once.

[1] Henrietta of France, daughter of Henry IV., and wife of Charles I., King of England.

[2] M. and Madame de Chaulnes.

The Chevalier is always fixed to his chair in his apartment; it has been judged improper for him to be out at night; and this situation, which disables him from going to Versailles, is very mortifying to him. I wish I could afford him some consolation and amusement; but the gloomy disposition occasioned by the gout, makes everything indifferent to him. I should be glad to be serviceable to him; but, to my great regret, I am quite useless. I am constantly making your compliments, and endeavouring to please him by your kind remembrances. Madame de Coulanges is full of acknowledgments; she bids me say a thousand kind things for her. She is wholly taken up with the Abbé Têtu, who is really very ill; he is at least troubled with low spirits and an inability to sleep, which the power of opium fails to remove.

Your son is a very pretty fellow; he was yesterday at the opera with the Dauphin. He has written to M. de Carcassonne, and will write to him again; the friendship of this uncle must be kept up to produce any effect, and I will take care that he does not neglect him. You paint to me in very natural colours the deformity of your bridegrooms; and I fancy myself present at the nuptials. I am very well pleased that, contrary to your custom, you have told M. Gaillard of the impression his merit and his penetrating looks have made upon me. The marriage of M. de Mirepoix seems to be the effect of magic.

LETTER 840

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, January 14, 1689.

I have dined, my dear child, and am now in the Chevalier's apartment; he is in his chair, with a thousand little aches and pains that fly about him. He has slept well; but this confinement affects his spirits, and vexes him exceedingly: I too am grieved at it, as I know the ill con-

sequences better than anyone. It is very cold; the thermometer is at the lowest degree; our river is frozen; it snows, freezes, and thaws at the same time; there is no walking in the streets; I keep to the house, and to the Chevalier's chamber. If I could have an answer from you before the end of a fortnight, I would desire you to tell me whether I do not incommode him, by staying with him all day; but as I have no time to lose, I put this question to himself, and I fancy he is not displeased at it. The weather is an additional cause of his illness; it is not the sort he likes; it is always unfavourable when it is extreme.

I have reminded M. de Lamoignon of your solicitation in favour of M. B****; this man will be equally sensible of your gratitude, whether at a distance, or near. I like that the feelings of gratitude should not be transient: but some persons of my acquaintance are so completely divested of it, that they substitute aversion and rudeness in its stead.

M. Gobelin is still at St.-Cyr: Madame de Brinon is at Maubuisson, where she will soon be tired; she can never remain long in a place; she has made many agreements, and been in several convents; her good sense does not screen her from this error. Madame de Maintenon is much pleased with the comedy [1] which she has made her young ladies of St.-Cyr perform; it will be a very fine piece according to report. She has paid a visit to the

[1] It was the *superieure* Brinon who first made the pensioners of St.-Cyr perform pieces of her selection. They were ill chosen. *Cinna*, and afterwards *Andromache*, were substituted in their places. But there was so much love in this last tragedy, and the young ladies played it so well, that it was not judged proper for their representation. This was what Madame de Maintenon wrote herself to Racine, at the same time desiring him to supply another poem, moral or historical. Racine hesitated: he wished to please the Court, but the public and posterity withheld him. He deemed it impossible to fill the frame that was given him, by a performance worthy of his muse. Boileau too despaired of it. Racine thought of the subject of *Esther*; and his friend considered it well judged, as it really was. This very Boileau, the severity of whose taste and character made him so much aspersed, gave, in his regard for Racine, the most perfect example of friendship; an example, perhaps, that will never again be met with between two men gifted with the same kind of superiority.

Queen of England, who, having made her wait a moment, said she was very sorry she had lost any time in seeing and conversing with her, and received her extremely well. Everyone is pleased with this Queen; she has an excellent understanding. She said to the King, on seeing him caress the Prince of Wales, who is a lovely child, "I formerly envied the happiness of my son, in not feeling his misfortunes; but I now pity him, for being insensible to Your Majesty's caresses and kindness." All she says is proper and to the purpose; but this is not the case with her husband: he has a great share of courage, but his understanding is not above the common standard; he relates what has passed in England with an insensibility, that excites the same feeling for himself. He is a good man [1], and partakes of all the amusements of Versailles. The Dauphiness does not intend to visit this Queen; she wants her right-hand seat and chair of State, which cannot be; she will therefore be always in bed, when the Queen visits her. *Madame* is to have an arm-chair upon the left hand, and the Princesses of the blood are to visit with her; before whom they have tabourets only. The Duchesses will be upon the same footing as at the Dauphiness's; this is settled. The King, knowing that a King of France gave a Prince of Wales only a chair on the left hand, chooses that the King of England should treat the Dauphin in the same manner, and precede him. He is to receive MONSIEUR without chair or ceremony. The Queen has saluted him, saying to our sovereign what I told you. It is not yet certain that M. de Schomberg is to succeed the Prince of Orange in Holland. This is a year of falsehood. The Marquise (d'Uxelles) contradicts every post the news she related the preceding one: is this knowing what passes? I detest inventions.

M. de Lauzun's star is returning to its former dimness, he has no apartment: all the romantic and marvellous

[1] The Archbishop of Rheims, brother of M. de Louvois, seeing him come out of the chapel of Versailles said: "What a good man! he has given up three kingdoms for one mass."

part of his adventure is forgotten, and it now contains nothing extraordinary. Such is the world, and such are the times!

LETTER 841

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, January 17, 1689.

My letter, then, is dignified with a title: this is a proof of its singular merit. I am glad my story amused you. I can never guess at the effect my letters will produce, but this has been a happy one.

If you sought an opportunity of coming to an explanation with the Archbishop, instead of suffering the misunderstanding which people endeavour to create between you to ferment, a short time would clear up the whole, or you would silence chatterers; either of these is desirable, and you will find good result from it; you will put an end, it is true, to the amusement of the Provençals; but it is only silencing ridiculous impertinence. M. de Barillon has arrived; he has found a family group with many of whose faces he was not acquainted. He is grown very fat, and said to M. de Harlai, "Sir, do not remind me of my fat, and I will say nothing to you of your lean." He is very lively, and much of the same disposition as his namesake whom you know. I will pay all your compliments to him, when they will not appear forced: I have done so with regard to Madame de Sully, who returns you a thousand with a very good grace; and to the Comtesse [1], who is too witty upon M. de Lauzun, whom she wished to raise to the pinnacle of honour, and who has neither an apartment at Versailles, nor the free admittance he formerly had. He is merely returned to Court, and his exploit does not appear so extraordinary, though a very pretty romance was at first made out of it.

[1] The Comtesse de Fiesque, the constant friend of M. de Lauzun, and who often performed the part of mediatrix between him and MADEMOISELLE.

This English Court is quite established at St.-Germain; they would not accept more than fifteen thousand livres a month, and have regulated their Court upon that foundation. The Queen is very much liked; our King converses very pleasantly with her; she has good sense without affectation. The King wished the Dauphiness to pay her the first visit, but she was always so conveniently indisposed, that this Queen paid her a visit three days ago, admirably dressed; a black velvet robe, a beautiful petticoat, her hair tastefully disposed, a figure like the Princesse de Conti's, and great dignity of manner. The King received her as she alighted; she went first into his apartment, where she had a chair below the King's; here she remained half an hour; he then conducted her to the Dauphiness, who was up; this occasioned a little surprise; the Queen said to her, "I expected to have found you in bed, Madame." "I wished to rise, Madame," replied the Dauphiness, "to receive the honour Your Majesty does me." The King left them, as the Dauphiness has no chair in his presence. The Queen took her place, with the Dauphiness on her right hand, MADAME on her left, and there were three other chairs for the three young Princes. They conversed together for upwards of half an hour; several Duchesses were present, and the Court was very numerous. At length she retired; the King gave orders to be informed of it, and handed her back to her carriage. I do not know how far the Dauphiness went with her, but I shall hear. The King, upon his return, highly praised the Queen; he said, "This is how a Queen ought to be, both in person and mind, holding her Court with dignity." He admired her courage in misfortunes, and her affection for her husband; for it is certain, that she loves him, as that hateful woman, Madame de R****, told you. Some of our ladies, who wished to assume the airs of Princesses, did not kiss the Queen's robe, some of the Duchesses wished to avoid it also; but the King was displeased at this, and they now pay her homage. Madame de Chaulnes has been informed of these particulars, but has not yet performed this duty.

She left the Marquis at Versailles, the young gentleman being very highly amused there; he has informed his uncle that he should go to-day to the ballet, at Trianon: the Chevalier will send you his letter. He is there then upon his good behaviour, executing all the commissions his uncle has given him, to accustom him to exactness in accounts; what advantage will he not derive from this sort of education! I have received an answer from M. de Carcassonne; it is a curious performance, but it must be passed over in silence; you may assure yourself I shall reply to it properly; he has taken seriously, and quite misunderstood, my raillery. Ah, my child! I perfectly comprehend your tears, when you figure to yourself this little fellow at the head of his corps, and think of all the good and ill fortune that may befall him in that situation! The Abbé Têtu is constantly immersed in the gloom of the vapours. I have made known to Madame de Coulanges all your kind expressions; she is always desirous of writing to you in my letter, but it never takes place. The Chevalier does not like concluding with professions of kindness; but without attending to him, I shall embrace you tenderly, and tell you that I love you with an affection, supported by the friendship you bear me, and proportionate to your merit; where is the harm of ending a letter thus, and saying what we constantly feel and constantly think?

Good day, Comte; you are both then of the same opinion as to your business and expense? would to God you had always been so! Good day, my darling Pauline; I cannot help laughing at you, for taking six weeks to consider what name you should give me, *grandmother* or *madame*; at length, however, you have decided for *Madame.*

M. DE CORBINELLI *also writes to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *Letter.*)

Since you have had the *blue ribbon*, Madame, I have found only this corner of a letter to tell you that I am highly pleased at it, and the more so, as Madame de Cal-

visson daily excites my pity upon this head; by dint of inspiring her with resignation, I have discovered the arduousness of my task, and consequently how agreeable it was, not to be able to dispense with me upon these occasions. Accept, then, Madame, my homage, and give me credit for saying, that never was *misanthropic* philosopher less so than I am in this respect; so much has joy unhinged me. By the bye, the sect of misanthropists derived its existence from the fireside of the Chevalier, who is the President, and does me the honour of admitting me into this dignified profession. I shall acquaint you with its progress, as soon as it becomes amusing in the history which I have begun. Do me the favour to inform the Comte de Grignan of my sentiments with respect to the Knighthood. I forgot to tell you, that the title of my book is *Misanthropism*; but your mother maintains, that it should be *Misanthropy*: oblige me with the decision of this knotty point, and you shall have the first copy.

LETTER 842

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, January 19, 1689.

This is the Wednesday so expressly forbidden by my dear Comtesse; but she cannot understand that it is a relief to me to talk to her. I often look at your dear portrait, and assure you, I begin too soon and too fondly to wish to see and embrace you, and to hear the sound of your voice; my heart is full of these desires, and these sentiments, and your portrait encourages, without gratifying them. Madame de Chaulnes was delighted with it the other day, and praised it so highly, and in so loud a tone, that you might almost have heard her, though you are at such a distance; for I know where you are, and this knowledge, in some degree, fixes my imagination, as I am sure to find you at a certain spot; but we are no longer neigh-

bours. I am astonished that Madame de Langlée should be in Provence, and not with her family[1]: it appears to me that you are not pleased with the dinner you gave her, but her delicacy is beyond all gratification.

I find the Chevalier's good sense points out to him the impropriety of going to Avignon, and incurring expenses there. You have blazed away in Provence for these twenty years; you should now, therefore, yield to the exigencies of your son, and retrench without delay: prudence directs this; this motive, which it is honourable to assign, will easily be understood; it will not seem a mere pretence, after so many proofs of your hospitality and magnificence. We must not attempt impossibilities; this truth has not, I am afraid, yet found a place in M. de Grignan's mind; but, judging of the future by the past, he concludes that things will always go on in their old track: this is a vain and delusive hope. The Chevalier and I have reasoned much upon this. Give up the idea of a reconciliation with the Pope, and draw from Avignon all that the King allows you; but consider it as a blessing from heaven to support your son, and not to be wasted in splendour; for if you have not the courage to retrench, as you have resolved to do, this succour of Providence will be useless to you. Such, my dear child, is the advice of a mother, whose love is as durable as it is affectionate.

We expect your son, who is to return to-night from Versailles; he set out a week ago with our Duchesse de Chaulnes. I long to know how he has amused himself there, and what sort of society he has found: we strongly recommended to him to avoid bad company; we are convinced that he does better when alone, than when he thinks he is observed by anyone: I shall know how he has conducted himself by M. de La Fayette, who takes great interest in him.

[1]Langlée, of whom mention has been made by Madame de Sévigné in several of her letters, had acquired a large fortune by gaming. He was very ostentatious, and very vain. Under the name of *Périandre*, La Bruyère describes him as his wife is here represented, blushing at the meanness of his family.

M. d'Avaux [1] came to see me the day before yesterday; my letter was already sealed: he spoke highly in your praise, loving and honouring you as much as when at Livry. He asked me whether you had received your *blue ribbon*; I told him you had not received it on the tenth; the rest, he said, had theirs, and as many things were neglected, he would endeavour there should be no further delay. He added, that he should be delighted to give you an account of his success, and to avail himself of the opportunity to pay his compliments to you. I am very glad he has taken upon himself this business; if it be useless, so much the better; and if not useless, so much the better still.

Madame de Chaulnes took me yesterday to the wedding of Madame de La Ferté, at the request of Madame de Mirepoix [2], who, however, was not there; it seems a misunderstanding had already taken place, and they were quarrelling again in the evening, because the ready money had not arrived. I saw the husband, and the bride of twelve years old, so little proportioned to the Ethiopian king. This marriage is so much condemned, that I believe the mother will never make her appearance here again. The Duchesse de La Ferté will be a burden to them; and upon this she calculated. She says, her own property is exhausted; that she has only an income of ten thousand livres; that she was in want of a son-in-law, and that to her son-in-law she is wedded: that is her constant discourse. As she rents a large house in the Rue St.-Croix, she says, that when she is at Versailles, they are to be economists; this economy is to consist of *bouillie* for the little wife. They are sometimes to dine with Madame de La Mothe, but this is not an establishment. These circumstances plainly show what will be the felicity of this alliance.

We paid a visit yesterday to the Marquise de Coislin, who has lost her mother, the aged d'Alègre. We also

[1] Antoine de Mesmes, Comte d'Avaux, Prévôt and Master of the Ceremonies of the King's Orders of Knighthood.

[2] Madame de Mirepoix, Madeleine du Pui-du-Fou, sister of M. de Grignan's second wife.

called on Mademoiselle de Grignan's friend: what a cruel fashion, to visit the afflicted so soon! We then waited upon MADEMOISELLE, who scolded me for not having been to see her before. I do not like to interfere with her petulances. Adieu, my dear child; do not increase your troubles; increase only your courage and good resolutions.

The same day, seven o'clock in the evening.

Your letter is come. The severe weather which has frozen the Rhône and the Durance, has converted the Seine into a mirror: it has benumbed our limbs, and so spoiled our streets, that I have not been out for a week, except with Madame de Chaulnes, at the expense of her horses; mine were not able to support it, so I did not offer them. I was often, during this time, in the apartment of the Chevalier, who is now pretty well, and intends going to Versailles, after the journey to Marly; but this must be said in the lowest whisper, for, should the gout overhear us, it might prevent the execution of the plan. The weather, which is a little milder to-day, has retarded our letters twenty-four hours.

The Archbishop (*of Aix*) has very high notions; but the more testy he is, the closer you should keep to him, like a horse that is restive: but, above all things, bear no malice in your heart. I perfectly comprehend how impossible it is, not to entertain three or four people occasionally, as you do; this is the only way to please them all, and you confer as many favours at a less expense. The Chevalier, when melancholy, is too rigid and severe; if he were there, I am sure he would act as you do. Remember me to Madame de Langlée, since she has not forgotten me: it is true, that I very much admired the taste of her dress. I am more satisfied than I was, as M. d'Avaux thinks of your *ribbon*; it appeared as if you had been forgotten.

Madame de Maintenon is going to make her young ladies perform *Esther*. It was very pretty of you to read my account of the installation in public. You do just what you please with me and my letters. Adieu, my beloved

child; I am as you left me, except that, instead of having the happiness of seeing you every day in this house, I often sigh deeply at finding you here no longer. I very much doubted whether you would be of our opinion respecting your brother.

LETTER 843

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, January 21, 1689.

The courier is not yet arrived, and I must return to your last letter to fill this. I never experienced friendship so tender, so firm, or so agreeable, as yours for me. I sometimes reflect how much this state, which I now enjoy, has been the sole and affectionate object of my ambition. You deserve to be beloved by your son, as I love you, and as you love him. He does not tell you all he feels; I scolded him for the simple account he gave you the day before yesterday. The Chevalier showed him your letter; it ought to melt him with tenderness and gratitude: was there ever such a heart as yours, or such true maternal affection? Your prelates judged of the effect of their letters at a distance; but we form a better opinion here; the very shadow of the thing has been scouted [1]; be assured, the nephew has been thought sharp-set, and the uncle either governed or superannuated. In short, nothing could have been more ill-judged, or more ill-timed, than this business; may it, as it merits, be buried in oblivion: I am pleased with myself, for having always considered it in this light. M. d'Avaux informed me, that he thought your *ribbon* had been sent; a cold has prevented his going to Versailles; we shall know from him whether the courier has been drowned, or what has happened. He wonders that you have not asked for it, by a note to M.

[1] She alludes to the office of Commandant of the King's Orders of Knighthood, the reversion of which the Archbishop of Arles, aged 86, had requested for his nephew the Coadjutor.

de Châteauneuf; but I neither dared to undertake or propose it.

Your son is busy with preparations for a masquerade on Sunday at the Palais-Royal; the Duc de Chartres has invited him: Madame d'Escars has been giving her advice, as well as Mademoiselle de Méri; you know the importance of these great affairs. He has gone to Madame de Bagnols' with Sanzei. It is said. that Maréchal d'Estrées is going to Brest; the pretext of the sea renders this intelligence bearable: he is to take a tour through Brittany, as if it were the spring of the year, and he in the spring of his life; such journeys are very fatiguing. Inform me of Pauline's disposition; if she has not been properly educated, it is still in your power to make a good impression on the wax that is not yet hardened, but will take any form you please. I have seen M. de Barillon, who is grown very fat; he enquired for you: he met your son at M. de Louvois's; he was so struck with his little face, which he thought so fine and handsome, that he enquired who he was, and on being informed, he embraced him five or six times, for the sake of his name, which brought father, mother, and grandmother, to his remembrance. Adieu, my dear child; it is impossible for me to tell you how I love you.

LETTER 844

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, January 24, 1689.

Your river Durance has at length suffered our letters to pass; the frost must have been severe indeed, to have stopped the rapidity of its course. We have had very severe weather, very sharp frosts, and yet I have not caught cold. I have several times kept the Chevalier's chamber; and, as Madame de Coulanges says, no one has had reason to complain of the inclemency of the season but he; to speak plainly, it did not appear to me that he was dis-

pleased at my presence. It now thaws; but I am in such good health, that I dare not take medicine, because I cannot hope to be better, and such a precaution appears to me ingratitude to Providence. The Chevalier is no longer afflicted with pain; but he dares not yet risk going to Versailles. I must tell you a speech of Madame de Coulanges which made me laugh, and which I thought very witty. M. de Barillon is beside himself, at meeting all his old friends; he frequently visits Madame de La Fayette and Madame de Coulanges; he said, the other day, to the last, "Ah, Madame, how agreeable your house is to me! I shall be very happy to visit you in the evenings, when tired of my family." "Sir," said she, "I shall expect you to-morrow." This turn was so quick, that we all joined in a general laugh.

Your son was last night at the Duc de Chartres's ball; he was very handsome, and will inform you of his success. You must not, however, calculate upon his studying much; he owned to us yesterday, very sincerely, that he is at present incapable of paying proper attention; his youth hurries him away, and he does not understand what he reads. We grieve that he has not, at least, a taste for reading, and that he wants inclination more than time. His frankness prevented our scolding him; I know not what we did not say to him; I mean the Chevalier, myself, and Corbinelli, who was rather warm upon the occasion. But we must not fatigue or force him; this taste will come in time, my dear; for it is not possible, that, with so much spirit, good sense, and love for his profession, he should have no desire to be made acquainted with the exploits of the heroes of antiquity, and particularly *Cæsar at the head of his Commentaries*[1]. Have patience, and do not fret: he would be too perfect were he fond of reading.

You astonish me by what you say of Pauline: pray, pray, my dear child, keep her with you; think not that a convent can repair the errors of education, whether as to

[1] It is evident that this was a ridiculous blunder which escaped some well-known personage at that period.

religion, with which the sisterhood are very little acquainted, or as to anything else. You will do much better at Grignan, when you have time for application. You will make her read good authors; even *Abbadie* [1] himself, as she has good sense; you will converse with her, and M. de La Garde will assist you: I am convinced that this is preferable to a convent.

As to peace with the Pope, the Abbé de Bigorre assures us that it is far from being concluded; that the Holy Father will give up nothing, and that it is generally believed, that M. de Lavardin and Cardinal d'Estrées will return immediately; avail yourself, then, of the time which God, who extracts good from evil, has given you [2]. The aged Sanguin is dead; she died like a heroine, walking about her chamber to the last moment, and looking in the glass to see Death in his natural colours. A compliment of condolence should be paid to M. de Senlis and M. de Livry, but not by letter, for they are already consoled: there is no one but you, my dear child, who refuses to comply with the order established since the creation of the world. By your description of Mademoiselle d'Oraison, she appears to me very amiable; she might be secured, if her father were reasonable: but what madness to love no one but ourselves, to think ourselves everything, to be devoid of the prudent, natural, and Christian-like thought of settling our children! You must be aware that I can scarcely comprehend this injustice. It is a happiness from which our self-love should derive gratification. I have written an answer to M. de Carcassonne [3], which the Chevalier greatly approved, and which he calls a master-piece. I have taken him in his own way, and, as I keep him at the distance of a hundred and fifty leagues from me, I say all I think: I tell him he should not estrange himself from

[1] See a note respecting him in Letter 783, of 13th August, 1688, in this volume.

[2] This circumstance gave rise to M. de Grignan's commanding for the King in Provence.

[3] The Bishop de Carcassonne was a Grignan, a very good economist, but a sufficiently bad relation.

his affairs; that he should make himself acquainted with them, calculate, compute, and regulate them; take his measures; know what can and what cannot be done; that such steps alone will enrich him; and that by pursuing them, nothing can prevent his compassing everything, duties, pleasures, and the sentiments of his heart for a nephew whose resource he ought to be; that with regularity we may go a great way, and without it must fail in everything: and then I am enthusiastic in my love for you, for M. de Grignan, for his son, for his family, for that name which he ought to support. I add, that I am inseparably attached to all these, and that my greatest grief is, that I can do nothing more for you; but that I give this charge to him, and pray to God to communicate all my sentiments to his heart, in order to increase those he has already: in short, my child, the letter is well arranged, though written hastily. The Chevalier's eyes were red with reading it; and, for my own part, I pierced myself so deeply with my own sword, that I wept bitterly. The Chevalier told me, there was nothing to be done but to send it, which I accordingly did.

You describe your pedant so humorously, that he reminds me of the doctor in the comedy, who wants to be always talking. If you had time, I think you might take advantage of his library; as it is well chosen and well stored, you might select what you pleased; but, alas! my child, you have not time to avail yourself of the beauty and extent of your understanding; you make use of nothing but what is good and substantial: this is well; but it is a pity that every part is not employed; I think M. Descartes will be a very considerable loser by this.

Maréchal d'Estrées is going to Brest; this makes us fear he will have the command of the regular troops there; I think, however, that the Governor will be, in some measure, countenanced, and that they will not seek to disgust him entirely. M. de Charost has returned for an instant, to justify himself respecting a hundred things that M. de Lauzun has improperly said, with respect to the state of

the place, and the reception he gave the Queen [1]. He has shown everything to be the reverse of M. de Lauzun's representations. This does no honour to the complainant, whose good stars seem to be arrested in their course by the anger of MADEMOISELLE: he has neither apartments nor admittance; he is simply at Versailles.

We fear lest the subtlety of the Archbishop (*of Aix*) should get the better of you; but I say "No," and that no one weighs his words more than you, in things of consequence. Madame de Coulanges desires to be remembered in the most friendly manner to you: she is always talking of writing to you. Since I have been chatting with the Chevalier, I have learned that you will not have your *ribbon* till after the meeting on the second of February, because your certificate of yourself was not received till after New Year's day, such is the rule. The Chevalier must have a good deal of news for you, as he has seen Dangeau, who is very intelligent. M. de Chaulnes will not be mortified on the score of Maréchal d'Estrées, who has nothing to do but with maritime affairs on the coasts.

LETTER 845

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, January 26, 1689.

Corbinelli has been delighted with your portrait of the *pedant*, whom you have drawn to the life: you talk of painting; the one you have given us of this man, so brimful of his own knowledge, who neither allows himself, nor

[1] Lauzun, on his arrival at Calais, with the Queen of England, wished at first to conceal from M. de Charost, who was Governor of the place, the quality of the person he brought with him. Obliged, at length, to make it known, he pretended that the Governor paid no respect to the Queen. He wished to reserve for himself the advantage of giving the first information to the King of her arrival. M. de Charost would not listen to him, and acted diametrically opposite to what he wished. Hence arose the resentment and designs of Lauzun, which are mentioned here.

anyone else, to breathe, and who, by main force, engrosses the whole conversation,—my dear girl, *this is a Titian.* I supped the night before last with Madame de Coulanges and the good Duchesses [1]; Barillon was there; he drank your health with an air of enthusiasm as Mademoiselle de Sévigné and Madame de Grignan: his ten years' Embassy has not spoiled him.

Madame d'Acigné came to see me yesterday; she informed me that M. de Richelieu was a Candlemas Knight, as well as M. de Grignan and several others, whose certificates were not received till after New Year's day. Tilladet will be created a Knight on that day, and others will be proposed to the Chapter; your *ribbon* will be sent at the same time: this is the truth of the case, which we did not know before.

You are very uneasy about this poor Chevalier, whose pains have entirely subsided; why, he was paying visits the whole of yesterday with his nephew: he took him to Maréchal de Lorges's, M. de Pomponne's, the Marquis d'Uxelles'; and he thinks of going to Versailles: thus all your notions are confused and misplaced. Your son diverts himself highly; he looked very handsome in his masquerade dress. Sanzei and he agree very well together; there seems to be no bickering, envy, or jealousy, between them: they pay no particular attention to the little girls; they merely play with them, like children. I cannot conceive what these boys are made of; they think of nothing but their equipages. Sanzei will set out on Monday for Poitou, to endeavour to raise money; he will go by way of Autri, and thence to his regiment of dragoons, which is twelve leagues from his estate: such is his destiny; he will immediately begin his campaign: God preserve these poor youths! Yours has every day the pleasure of hearing his corps praised, that is, your corps [2]. All that have seen him compliment him upon it. The Chevalier can tell you, as

[1] De Chaulnes and du Lude.

[2] This was a newly-raised corps, which had been formed in the Earldom of Grignan, and in some degree under the direction and through the means of Madame de Grignan.

well as I can, that M. de Lamoignon has no intention of marrying his daughter [1] so soon. Several weddings are spoken of; but they must be nearer to a conclusion before I can mention them to you.

Maréchal d'Estrées is going to Brest, to have the command of Maritime affairs, and the sea-coasts, with some troops. God preserve us from any broil that may render it necessary for him to take the sole command. We hope that such an offence will not be given to our Governor, and that the employments will be divided, as Brittany is quite sufficiently extensive. Perhaps the Prince of Orange will not have time this year to turn his thoughts to France; he has occupation enough in England and Ireland, where they are inclined to take up arms for the King; our seas are all in motion; your Mediterranean alone is in a state of tranquillity. I know not how far the extravagant vows of your women will prevail; I would fain add that they should eat no more oranges, but banish both the colour and the fruit: these whims should be exhibited upon our coasts. I am, however, truly of opinion, that the King and Queen of England are better off at St.-Germain, than in their perfidious kingdom. The King of England calls M. de Lauzun his Governor; but he governs no one else, and is not much in favour. Their Majesties have only accepted of what the King would have given them, fifty thousand livres a month, and will not live like sovereigns; many English are come over to them, or they would not have accepted so much; in short, they wish to pursue a plan that may last. They have reminded me of my dear romances; but a little intrigue is wanting. I finish your acknowledgments here, as I formerly finished your romances, and the friendship of your dogs. La Chau is upon the point of setting out: I send a little badge of the Order of the Holy Ghost to M. de Grignan; I wish him to wear it, when the courier, who brings the *ribbon*,

[1] Madeleine de Lamoignon, married in 1693 to Claude Longueil, Marquis de Maisons, afterwards President *à mortier* in the Parliament of Paris.

arrives. I entreat you, my dear Comte, to accept this trifling present; it is to make amends for the insult my daughter sometimes offers you, in mentioning me, instead of you. These are strange presents, a *ribbon*, a sash, a little dove, a shadow, a breath, a nothing; this is what we give, when we have nothing left to give: I have resigned all: I examined all the effects and consequences on one side only, and I remained firm, saying to myself, "Well, if I am slighted, or ruined, God may turn this ingratitude to my advantage, and render it the cause of my retreat from the world, and of my eternal salvation." Under this idea, I have not repented of anything I have done: your friendship, and the disposition of your heart towards me, make my life too happy; but you are sometimes too far from me, and I feel your absence painfully.

LETTER 846

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, January 28, 1689.

I am delighted at the remote correspondence you carry on with this good Governor [1], who adores you, and gives me a thousand testimonies of his friendship upon every occasion. His wife is incessantly praising you, and thanking you for your remembrance; she entreats me to say a thousand kind things to you for her. She is gone to Versailles, where she will see the Queen of England, and will tell me many things that I shall relate to you.

The *comedy* [2] or *tragedy* of *Esther* has already been performed at St.-Cyr. The King thought it excellent. The Prince shed tears. Racine never produced a finer or more affecting piece: Esther's prayer for Ahasuerus is enchanting. I was in pain to think that the part of the

[1] The Duc de Chaulnes, who was in his government in Brittany.

[2] All theatrical pieces were, till then, comprised under the title of *comedy*.

King should be represented by a little girl, but they say she does it very well. Madame de Caylus performs the character of *Esther*, and even surpasses Champmêlé; if this piece is printed, I will send it you immediately. We want the Abbé Têtu to see it; he is, really, to be pitied; his disorder increases daily; opium has lost its power, and only serves to make him a little easy: this is a pitiable state, and yet he goes out. I told him of your concern for him, and he entreated me to make his grateful acknowledgments to you.

The marriage of M. de Rouci [1] approaches, to my great astonishment, as there is to be no *tabouret*. Mademoiselle de La Marck is to marry M. de Brionne—another matter of astonishment, on account of the lady's age [2], which is said to be upwards of thirty. It is whispered that M. de Mortain and Mademoiselle d'Usèz [3] are to come together; and M. de Crussol [4] and Mademoiselle de Ventadour [5]; but I vouch for none of these reports.

I am now in the Chevalier's apartment; he is in his chair stamping with his left foot. I ask him, "What news, Sir? which of these reports is true?" he replies; "God is God, Madame, that is all I know." I am very much inclined to tell you no more, and to take my leave of you with this truth.

M. de Charost is here; he has completely justified himself, with regard to all that M. de Lauzun clandes-

[1] François de Roye de La Rochefoucauld, Comte de Rouci, married, 8th of February following, Catherine-Françoise d'Arpajon, daughter of the Duc of that name, and of Catherine-Henrietta d'Harcourt.

[2] This marriage did not take place. Madame de La Marck married, March 7 of the same year, Jacques Henri de Durfort, Duc de Duras.

[3] Louise-Catherine de Crussol d'Usèz was not married till November, 1691, and then to Louis-François Le Tellier, Marquis de Barbesieux.

[4] Louis, Marquis de Crussol, afterwards Duc d'Usèz, died a bachelor, in 1693.

[5] Anne-Geneviève de Lévis was married on February 16, 1691, to Louis-Charles de La Tour de Bouillon, Prince de Turenne, who fell at Steinkerque in 1692, and to a second husband February 15, 1694, Hercule-Mériadec de Rohan, Duc de Rohan-Rohan.

tinely said of him. He will be a Knight at Candlemas. The King has sent old Courtebonne from Calais to Hesdin, which is the government of his son. He is replaced by Laubanie, a good officer, who is to be under the command of M. de Charost, whose labours will be very much diminished by the change; M. de Charost will not return these two months. Everyone has his afflictions: I am frequently in company, when it is said that the Commandant of Provence alone is exempt from them, his situation being a pleasant and a noble one. It is a pity that it does not agree with everything that is asserted here: let us, however, enjoy the distinction, and the peace and tranquillity that prevail no where else. I am as much astonished as you are, that your women should disguise themselves and make vows [1]: it is for ours to tremble, and not *game*. I never knew such misplaced fears. Adieu, my dear child; I do not tell you how much I love you, since you know it already.

Eight o'clock at night.

The hope of Madame de Coulanges's writing to you, has been held out too long; it is time she should convince you, that she has something more than good intentions.

Madame DE COULANGES *writes to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.
(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter.*)

Madame de Sévigné would never let me write to you, Madame; she cannot comprehend how you can occupy my thoughts for a moment; I never met with so strange a woman. I nevertheless inform you, that if you have a desire to pay your court, you should ask to see *Esther*; you know what *Esther* means; all persons of sense are charmed with it, and you will be more charmed than anyone. It is a mere trifle to come from Grignan to sleep at Versailles; I should be very happy to meet you there, for I do not believe anyone can long more ardently to see you than I

[1] These vows were, to wear white, violet, or drab colour, etc., not to frequent places of public amusement, and to abstain from play.

do. I could not help giving you this advice, Madame, knowing that if Madame de Sévigné were left to herself, she would always forget you. I must not conclude this complimentary line without embracing M. de Grignan; it is a right to which I shall always lay claim; I will embrace him notwithstanding his Holy Ghost. Madame de Frontenac, and Mademoiselle d'Outrelaise, desire me to say a great deal upon their account. The poor Abbé Têtu has the vapours still; I do all I can to cure him, but without success. M. de Coulanges says he cannot have the honour of writing to you, because he has a pain in his foot; he fancies he has the gout, and cries out like a madman, and all this to imitate the Chevalier de Grignan.

LETTER 847

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, January 31, 1689.

Yes, yes, I do indeed look like a person who has been alarmed at your sore throat; and I cannot tell you too, how freely this letter of the twenty-fourth, which informs me of your recovery, makes me breathe again: I am as happy therefore as absence will allow me to be; for I must acknowledge, that fancy is a cruel tormentor, and greatly insults our weakness at such a time. But preserve your health, if you love me, if you love us all, and wish us all to be well; my health seems entirely devoted to your pleasure, it is so regular and perfect. I am going, upon your assurance, into the Chevalier's apartment; that dear little room that so naturally attracts me, which I have visited for more than ten years, and where I am still so well received. The Chevalier will very soon go to Versailles; he is well, which gives me great pleasure, though the tedious hours which I must endure in his absence, present me with a dreary prospect. We laugh together, we talk of you, and I am out of my element when he is not here. Your

son has been a courtier these three days; the Duc de Charost, who is here, and has seen him, gave me yesterday a very good account of him.

Madame de Chaulnes has seen the Queen of England, with whom she is greatly pleased; the little Prince was dressed like a puppet; he is handsome and lively, and is continually dancing in his nurse's arms: these are the truly happy days of infancy. The histories which we read over again on account of this event, are replete with the perfidy of the people. The Prince of Orange is not quite at his ease in London, there being three parties: that of the King and the Bishops, which is very weak; that of the Prince of Orange, which is very strong; and a third, consisting of Republicans and Non-Conformists. All Ireland is in the interest of the King; he would have done well to have escaped thither: he is not so much liked as the Queen. He calls M. de Lauzun his master; the master stands in great need of one himself. MADEMOISELLE TRIUMPHS. Maréchal d'Estrées is set out for Brest and the sea-coasts. The vigilance of M. de Chaulnes gives great satisfaction; he is as active as a man of twenty-five.

I do not think that your journey to Avignon can ever take place at a better time; Lent is a favourable circumstance; the air is mild there, and, from the favourable light in which the Pope views you, he will let you long enjoy this revenue. You should laugh at the news of the *Place des Prêcheurs*[1]; the carrying off the Princesse of Orange, and the taking of her husband, are truly ludicrous; to these we may add the siege of Boisle-Duc, which was only a jest. Everything as yet is calm; nothing but diversions are thought of. The King and the whole Court are delighted with the tragedy of *Esther*. Madame de Miramion[2], and eight Jesuits, among whom was Father Gaillard, honoured it with their presence at the last repre-

[1] This was a place of meeting every morning at Aix, where the most false and absurd reports were propagated.

[2] A lady famous for her piety, for the great number of her good works, and the foundations instituted by her.

It was on the subject of these representations that Madame de

sentation: in short, it is Racine's master-piece; if I were a devotee, I should be ambitious to see this piece. The Princesse de Conti is still an advocate for the opera; this, they say, is because it breathes love, which is quite out of fashion.

M. de Charost has had a charming conversation with the King; it seems that M. de Lauzun has endeavoured ineffectually to do him ill offices; this is no credit to Lauzun: the King knows that Charost has always loved and served him as a friend. The reason of Courtebonne's removal from Calais is his great age, fearing it might prevent his being sufficiently vigilant. The King removes him to Hesdin, his son's government, and sends Laubanie, who is a good active officer, to Calais. M. de Charost told the King he was very much pleased at these arrangements; that he would zealously unite with Laubanie, of whose knowledge and experience he should be glad to avail himself; and that the good of the service should be the sole object of his pursuit. The King appeared highly pleased with this. M. de Charost will return to Calais during Lent; in the meantime he will be created a Knight, and will not oppose the proposition made to the Chapter of M. de Grignan; after which the Holy Ghost will fly straight to you.

I know not what is become of all the marriages I told you of. M. de Mirepoix's becomes very gloomy. The Duchesse (*de La Ferté*) says, "I am quite exhausted, I can neither board nor lodge them." People say to her, "Why do you ruin yourself?" Madame de Mirepoix says, "I will take them and maintain them." The little girl cries; in short, I never saw a doll married, or so ridiculous a marriage as this. Yet was he not one of the best bred

Maintenon said, "Now we shall only play for the saints," thus seeking to salve her conscience, or perhaps prevent criticism.

Marie Bonneau, the widow of Jean-Jacques de Beauharnais, Lord of Miramion, here mentioned, had the honour of the conversion of Madame de Montespan; an honour she had purchased by the great inconvenience of being long a witness to her fury, and the confidante of her disgrace.

men in France? My dear child, compare not your heart with that of any other person; God has given you a perfect one, thank him for it: your ill humour was a mere vapour, a mist before the sun; but the hearts of others are injured root and branch, so that you will never serve as an excuse for them.

LETTER 848

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, February 2, 1689.

To-day, according to all appearances, you were admitted by the Chapter with some other stragglers; and I doubt not that the messenger will set out to-morrow with your *ribbon*, as well as that of M. de Monaco. The bird-lime, to which your dove's wing stuck, was this; your acts of faith and attestation of life and manners, did not come to hand till the very day on which the first Chapter was held. You do too much honour to Marie de Rabutin-Chantal to take her part, and defend her cause: but do you know, if Jeanne Frémiot [1] were not in heaven, she would scold you well. She was the daughter of two or three Presidents. What, Sir, do you take us for? and *Berbisi*, on her mother's side. When people have been engaged in law-suits, they should be careful of what they say.

Do not fatigue yourself, my dear child, by writing long letters; you cannot doubt that they are agreeable to me, but then they destroy you: tell me only of the state of your health, of your affairs and your intentions; these things are, indeed, too dear to my heart to be passed over. Leave me to chat, but do not reply; refer me, with regard to certain particulars, to the Chevalier; in short, I wish you to tell me of nothing but your health and your wel-

[1] Madame de Sévigné's grandmother, known to this day as the Blessed Mother of Chantal.

fare. So the poor little *black owls* [1] frightened you? I thought they would, and could not help laughing to myself; you think they look melancholy: but they do not pout [2], nor have they the voice of a *Megœra*; and when you are acquainted with their abilities, you will find that, instead of being of ill omen, they give beauty to the headdress at least.

The Queen of England seems more inclined, if it pleased God, to reign in the beautiful kingdom of England, where the Court is numerous and splendid, than to be at St.-Germain, though overwhelmed with the heroic bounties of our monarch. As to the King of England, he seems contented there, and it is for that reason he is there. I embrace my amiable Comtesse, and the Comte, in honour of the festival; and for the same reason I must take my leave, to go to vespers and the sermon. I am reading with pleasure the *Règles Chrétiennes* [3] of M. Le Tourneux; I only scanned them upon Madame de Coulanges's table, they are now upon my own.

LETTER 849

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday morning, February 4, 1689.

I expected the Chevalier and your son last night. I heard that a brevet to take your *blue ribbon* had been dispatched to you, and that the *ribbon* and *cross*, which the King had given you, would be sent to-day; now, then, I am happy. Take special care of this charming ribbon *ad multos annos*, adorn your fine figure with it, and do not forget it during the three hours which you set apart every

[1] A fashionable hood of that time.

[2] See La Fontaine's Fable of *The Eagle and the Owl.*

[3] Principes et Règles de la Vie Chrétienne. (Rules and Principles of a Christian Life), first printed in 1688.

day for love [1]; it is an ornament that should accompany the charms of this faithful passion; my daughter seems so well satisfied, that I may enter into this confidence. I find myself insensibly talking to you, my dear Comte, and I am compelled to embrace you, to close my discourse.

I now, my dear child, return to you. It appears to me very likely that the Chevalier may stay to go to St.-Cyr, where Madame de Maintenon sends everyone of profound wisdom: for instance, Racine mentioned M. de Pomponne to her, she and the King both gave an exclamation, and His Majesty ordered him to go there. Accordingly the illustrious Pomponne went yesterday: I shall not finish my letter till I have seen him, and till the Chevalier and your son are returned: thus, my dear child, do I toss about the ball. Madame de Chaulnes and I supped on Wednesday night on Madame de Coulanges's pullet, in Coulanges's private room, who has the gout like a little debauchee; he roars, is carried on a man's back, sees company, suffers a great deal, and does not sleep; but all this is a mere jest, for he laughs even in the midst of it all.

I dined yesterday at Madame de La Fayette's, with Tréville and Corbinelli; we had some partridges from Auvergne, and some pullets from Caen; his son, who you know is the Marquis's spy, told me he did very well, that he had a good manner, kept good company, frequented good tables, that he was much beloved, and by some was called in jest the *little tom-cat* [2]; while others who were more polite, on account of his youth, called him *Puss*. This seems to be all very well. The Chevalier has sent me the same account; here is his letter: this whispered panegyric, which is so natural, will give you pleasure. You will not be displeased to know the difference between a good and a bad corps. M. de Louvois said aloud the other day, to

[1] We know, and so do many other persons, that a gentleman at Paris was so infatuated with his *blue ribbon*, that he had one made of tin painted, to wear in the bath upon his naked skin. It is probable that he took seriously what Madame de Sévigné here recommends in jest.

[2] Madame de Sévigné had formerly called her grandson *Puss*.

M. de Nogaret, "Sir, your corps is in a very bad condition." "Sir," said he, "I did not know it." "You ought to know it," said M. de Louvois; "have you seen it?" "No, Sir," said Nogaret. "You should have seen it, Sir." "Sir, I will give orders respecting it." "Orders should have been given before: you must act consistently, Sir; either declare yourself a courtier, or perform your duty as an officer." This must be very grating to Madame de Calvisson [1], she now sees the consequence of neglecting the service: and you should be very happy in the thought of the Marquis's fine noble corps, which is of your own creation; as also of his attention, as well as his journey to Châlons: this is a compensation for all your trouble and his. This dialogue I had from the Chevalier; but as he tells me he does not send you such details, I thought I should amuse you by relating them.

Madame de La Fayette, who never sleeps, and who is in a bad state of health, sends you a thousand friendly remembrances. M. de Tréville ensures your wit and beauty, by his peculiar admiration. Madame de Lavardin places in the first rank of her praises, your heroic fortitude in taking your departure at the same time your son took his for Philisbourg: in short, my dear child, your modesty would have been laid under some contribution.

M. de La Vieuville is dead. He is the first who has diminished the number of Knights. Benserade says, that there is no rearing any Governors for M. de Chartres [2].

Friday, two o'clock in the afternoon.

At this moment, my dear child, I see *Poirier* coming into the room with your *blue ribbon*. I enclose the Chevalier's note, by which you will find that the gentlemen

[1] Mother of M. de Nogaret.

[2] Charles Duc de La Vieuville, who died February 2, 1689, was appointed February 28, 1686, Governor to Philippe, Duc de Chartres, afterwards Duc d'Orléans, and Regent. He succeeded Godefroi, Comte d'Estrades, Maréchal of France, who, after being appointed Governor to this Prince in 1685, died February 26, 1686; so that the Duc de Chartres lost two of his Governors in less than four years.

are not tired of Versailles; that the Chevalier is delighted and in raptures with *Esther*; and that he thinks it proper to send you your *ribbon* by the post, in the same manner as M. de Monaco's is sent. I shall go presently to M. Orceau's, to recommend to him the care of my little box. The Chevalier has performed his duty well at Versailles, and I am now going to perform mine, which leaves me only the honour of telling you, that *I have done no harm* in transmitting you this fortunate *ribbon*. Put it on speedily without ceremony; when you are an installed Knight, you will do as the rest do. I embrace you, my dear child, with all my heart; you do not doubt it.

LETTER 850

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, February 7, 1689.

Good day, Comte; are you dressed? do you look well? I think the *blue ribbon* becomes you admirably. I give you joy, and embrace you with this new ornament.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *then continues to her Daughter.*

I went on Friday, after having sealed my letter, to M. de Pomponne's; he was returned from St.-Cyr. Madame de Vins must have informed you, that Madame de Maintenon mentioned him, and that he received the King's orders to attend the tragedy the next day. The King told him in the morning, that he was a very good judge of such things, and that he would doubtless be pleased. M. de Pomponne was highly so. Racine has outdone himself; he loves God as he loved his mistresses; he is the same as to sacred, as he was as to profane things; the Holy Scriptures are strictly followed in this piece, everything is fine, everything is grand, everything is treated with dignity. You have seen what the Chevalier wrote to me; his

praises and tears are agreeable. The King and Queen of England were at the representation of it on Saturday; would to God, my dear child, I could have been present!

Your letter has given me great pleasure, and answers very well to all the articles in mine; but, my child, it is too long, though it be written with evident facility and swiftness. I cannot help feeling some anxiety at the number of letters you write, and at your long stay in your alcove, from which you retire with a great pain in your back, a great pain in your head, and greatly exhausted; so that the pleasure I receive in reading your letters is always blended with sorrow, like everything else in life. For instance, Avignon, which I do not mention for the reasons you have given, is nevertheless a good place, and comes very seasonably for your child; this is a paternal Providence, for which we should thank God; while, on the other hand, the wind, the tempests, the hurricanes, the devils let loose, which have almost carried away your Castle, have occasioned an unexpected expense of a thousand crowns. Why did not these demons carry away the uncouth building of Carcassonne where the Coadjutor was?—Ah! my dear child, what havoc! what universal alarm! what general perturbation! you paint this horrible scene like Virgil; but there was no one present to say *quos ego*—This tempest has been spoken of here. The Bishop of Languedoc writes to Coulanges, that he was under great apprehension for the Castle of Grignan. God defend you from ever passing a winter there, whilst there remains any other place or city in France.

I cannot help saying a word or two more of this marriage [1], which becomes every day more ridiculous. The mother leaves them because she says she is ruined. I think what the Duc de La Ferté says is very good, and that he is in the right; the wisdom and pride of M. de Mirepoix need not frighten him, for he is his son-in-law. At length the marriage of Madame de Coislin with M. d'Enriche-

[1] See Letters 837, 842, and 847, of 10th, 19th, and 31st of January, 1689, respectively, all of which are in this volume.

mont seems nearly concluded; they have sent to Rome, which is something. Mademoiselle d'Arpajon is betrothed to-day at Versailles to the Comte de Rouci: it is reported that he said to her: "Ugly as you are, Mademoiselle, I cannot help loving you." None of the other matches I mentioned to you are certain. I expect our courtiers to-morrow. It is to be hoped that your son will some time or other be fond of reading: if it were not for this hope, I should be sadly grieved; his youthful frolics entirely engage him, and take up all his time.

You mention Brittany, and set forth all the reasons that should induce me to go there. It is true, that M. de Chaulnes writes to me incessantly to entreat me to accompany Madame de Chaulnes, who will set out this Lent with two carriages; he promises to complete all my business for me, and to bring me back after the States adjourn; so that I can never have a better opportunity. Madame de Chaulnes is not wanting in solicitations on her side, as you may suppose. I have, besides, a real occasion to finish in that country two or three little affairs with the Abbé Charrier, who desires me not to lose the opportunity of his stay in Brittany, which will not be long after the rising of the States; he will then go to Lyons, and offers to accompany me to Grignan. Such, my dear child, is my situation; put yourself in my place, reflect on the circumstances and opportunities that offer, and give me your opinion; for I will be governed by you, and I entreat you to believe, that after this necessary journey for my business, I shall be as much at your service, as my heart and inclination prompt me to be.

Pauline then is not perfect; I could never have supposed that her chief imperfection would have been, ignorance of religion. You must instruct her in this, which you are very capable of doing; it is your duty, and you have good books to assist you: in return, your sister-in-law, the Abbess, will teach her the world. Your opinion of M. de Lauzun must be raised, the King has admitted him again to Court; this is a thing which surprises everybody,

and enrages the Princesse. He had said that Calais was in a very bad condition, and that the Governor had given a very ill reception to the Queen: M. de Charost has proved both assertions to be false. I saw Corbinelli at Madame de Coulanges's: he has got Molinos [1] in his head. Adieu, my dear child: I am yours, more than I can express.

LETTER 851

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, February 9, 1689.

Our two Grignans are returned, and I am delighted; their absence was tedious to me: your son is very handsome; I scarcely dare tell you so, as I know it does you harm. He is quite at home at Court, is in raptures at being there, and is beloved by everyone. The Chevalier is perfectly satisfied with him. You are in the right, to prefer so many good qualities to the height of his person; but he is not short: he will, at least, be as tall as the Chevalier; and his figure is, indeed, very agreeable and noble.

The Abbé Têtu returns you a thousand thanks for your kindness; he has taken his vapours to Versailles; he has mentioned me to Madame de Maintenon, respecting the representation of *Esther*: she gave him a more favourable answer than I deserved: I shall go to St.-Cyr on Saturday or Tuesday, I shall speak of you, and pity you for not being able to see this miracle; there will be one every year to console the absentees.

Friday, February 11.

I have informed you how well pleased M. de Charost is with his master, and his master with him; and that M. de Lauzun's assertions have done no harm to anyone but himself; he is nevertheless admitted as before; he is in-

[1] A Spanish priest, author of a new Mystical Doctrine, known by the name of *Quietism*. See Letter 781, of 2nd December, 1687, in this volume.

debted for this, it is said, to the King of England. *Esther* continues to be performed. Madame de Caylus [1], who was the Champmêlé of the performers, is not to act any more: she was too good and too affecting an actress; nothing but the pure simplicity of these little innocent souls is required; I will give you a very good account of everything. The journey of Madame de Chaulnes into Brittany, is neither certain, nor near; I will inform you from time to time of the situation of this affair.

Mademoiselle d'Arpajon is now Madame de Rouci: there is no talk of Mademoiselle de La Marck's marriage with anyone. Coislin's nuptials have not yet taken place, *this child is very difficult to christen.* You are too humorous upon the subject of your disagreeable sermon; it was enough to have set the convent on fire: in Provence, you are obliged to listen to strange preachers. We were under no uneasiness with respect to the tardiness of the courier; but we admired the chance that made him fail us on the very day that we were more desirous than usual of receiving your letters; this made the Chevalier say *God is God.*

Nothing, my child, is more certain than that all your illness proceeds from too much writing; you are aware of this, but you will not own it. You should walk a little, and take the air when it is fine weather; you have some very pleasant hours there, as we have here, and now, for instance, it is very mild: the month of February is much finer than the month of May; it must then be quite warm at Aix: let me advise you to take exercise, for it is death to be always confined to your box of an alcove: the bare idea of it stifles me.

I supped last night at M. de Lamoignon's with the Duchesse du Lude, who had returned from Court, Madame de Coulanges, M. de Beauvais, and M. de Troyes.

[1] Madame de Caylus, daughter of M. de Villette, was, according to the fashion of Brittany, the niece of Madame de Maintenon. Her *Souvenirs,* written very pleasantly, are a faithful representation of the Court of France at this period. Racine himself requested that she might take the part of *Esther,* and when it was thought necessary for her to resign it, he wrote for her the beautiful prologue on *Piety.*

During supper, Mademoiselle de Méri disguised your son with some old black petticoats, which were put on so well, and made him appear such a whimsical figure, that everyone attacked him: he went to MONSIEUR'S, who talked to him a good while without knowing him, as well as M. de Chartres; he answered everyone very smartly: this will give him confidence, though, in truth, the Chevalier will tell you he does not want it. Adieu, my best and dearest child; you are going to Marseilles, where you will see, in my opinion, the finest prospect in the world.

LETTER 852

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, February 14, 1689.

You dwell too much upon our uneasiness: it was not so extreme, when we found that no one had received letters from Provence, and we drew no other inference from it, than that the courier had not yet arrived. It is true, we were not pleased with your sore throat, and less so in the heavy night-dews of Aix than elsewhere, and that we were anxious to hear from you; the arrival of your letters gave us great pleasure; all this is very natural, and what you would have felt for us in the same case. You told us you had been to blame, that you had walked in the rain. which gave you cold; we were of your opinion, and as we took your word for your being to blame, we scolded you: upon this you scold us in turn, and we scold you again. We are far from dissuading you from walking; quite the contrary, my dear child; walk and take exercise, breathe the fine air you are in, do not be always immured in that dark Palace [1], nor in that box of an alcove. Use your horses, or they will suffer as well as you: but shut yourself up when it is cold, when you have a sore throat; above

[1] M. de Grignan lived at Aix in the old Palace belonging to the Comtes of Provence.

all, do not repent of having informed us truly of the state of your health; we love truth, and therefore, my dear child, do not deceive us. M. du Bois, who is Madame de La Fayette's physician and mine, wants to be yours also; he wants to write to you, to prescribe bleeding in the foot, and then to take periwinkle tea, which will restore your health and purify your blood: this, he says, is sound treatment and a sure remedy. What grieves me most is, the deplorable state of your Castle, as well from the violence of the winds, as the folly of the Coadjutor, which is as fatal as the storm. How absurd is his conduct! to build and pull down like children, who are taught to work upon a little piece of canvas! He does exactly the same; he turns your house upside down; it is a little camp de Maintenon, the air of which will not be less fatal. You should really come to Paris, as there is no place where you are in which you can be secure. I do not believe M. de Grignan will suffer you to pass the summer in so disagreeable a situation, so destructive to your comfort, and so injurious to your health. I thus tell you freely what I think, that some place of safety should be procured for you. But what says M. de Grignan to this folly? I do not believe such conduct can be paralleled, to come and overthrow the Castle of his fathers, and make it uninhabitable. I am going to write to M. de La Garde, I am persuaded he will be of our opinion.

I will not yet think of the departure of our poor Grignans, this sensibly affects me. I admire with you, the Chevalier's resolution: the God of hosts will support him, for nothing less can. Madame de Chaulnes informs me, that I shall see *Esther*, that Madame de Coulanges is to accompany me to Versailles, and that we shall have her equipage, for I go only upon this condition. I therefore restore the Chevalier to his liberty, who was to have taken me after dinner: he is going to pay his court; I am delighted to think he can do so, but grieved that it must be by forsaking this little apartment, which is the only thing that makes this dismal Carnavalet Mansion bearable and

alive: when he is away, everyone keeps to his cell. Adieu, my best and dearest child, I embrace you a thousand times. Good heavens, how rapidly do your sentiments pass into my heart! how truly are all your interests mine!

LETTER 853

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, February 16, 1689.

The Chevalier is still at Versailles, but I expect him this evening. The Marquis dined with me the other day; I conversed a good deal with him, and I can assure you, with much satisfaction. There is an air of truth and modesty in all he says, which does not in the least resemble the style of those thoughtless youths, who always appear fools or liars. He related to me all the fatigues of his journey to Philisbourg, which were very great; little d'Auvergne had the fever for four days, from mere weariness; the Marquis is strong, and bears this first trial with great courage; he told me his other adventures, gave me an account of all the blows that were given on each side of him, and the contusion he received; and this, without ostentation, with a cool composed air of veracity, which is highly pleasing. I love to converse with him, and lose no opportunity of doing it; he supped yesterday with M. Turgot, and some young folks, at the rich little La Martillière's; he returned at midnight. He is gone to the horse-market, being wholly taken up with his corps; he will write to you to-night: he loves you, and knows your extreme affection; you do nothing for him to which he is not as sensible as you can possibly wish: it is not even necessary to rouse him upon this subject.

I dined yesterday with Mademoiselle de Goileau; it was a company of wits; the Abbé de Polignac, the Abbé de Rohan, his doctor, Abbé David, and Corbinelli. After dinner they discussed, very pleasantly, the philosophy of

your father Descartes; it was with great difficulty they could comprehend the motion God gives to a ball that is pushed by another; they would have it that the first communicated its motion, and you know how the Abbé Polignac and Corbinelli exclaimed upon the occasion: this diverted me, and brought my dear little Cartesian to my remembrance, whom even I could understand so readily. From thence I went to Madame de La Fayette's, where, by good fortune, I found only M. de Pomponne and M. de Barillon: we spent two hours very agreeably, and the more so, as we are seldom so fortunate. They say that the English Parliament has made the Prince of Orange King, because the former King has deserted his kingdom, *and broken the treaty between sovereign and subjects*; that his flight is an *abdication*; that they are determined to render the throne elective; and that the Parliament would not allow the Princesse of Orange to be Queen: these were the reports of yesterday. The Chevalier will bring news from Versailles. Some say with regard to the King of England's apathy, that by hearing him talk, it is easy to guess why he is here.

I shall not go to St.-Cyr with M. de Lamoignon and Madame de Coulanges, till Saturday; they have promised to return with me. I shall give you an account of this journey. Madame de Chaulnes has ceased to talk of hers; all I know is, that she will be very glad to take me with her; I leave her to disentangle her own thread. I shall seal my letter to-night, after the Chevalier's return.

Eight o'clock at night.

The Chevalier has not arrived. I suppose he wishes to stay till all the general officers are named, that he may know the destination of each. I have seen Madame de Chaulnes and Madame de Coulanges; they are in raptures with *Esther*. The first embraces and loves you, and wants to take me with her into Brittany; she will ask your leave; but as she is here on business, she will not set out so soon as was expected. Madame de Coulanges has avenged

your cause with Madame d'Estrées [1]. She told her, finding her silent upon the panegyric of *Esther*, "You certainly, Madame, must have renounced praise of every kind, since you do not praise this piece." Madame d'Estrées is in a great rage with Madame de Coulanges, who desires you to console yourself at not being praised by this lady, as she does not praise *Esther*.

LETTER 854

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, February 18, 1689.

The Chevalier returned last night in tolerable health; he has an intermittent cold, which appears to me a gouty humour disguised. The Marquis, after having given orders for his equipage, is, in turn, going to pay his court, and to spend the three flesh-days at Versailles. Madame de Coulanges is returned from thence and from St.-Cyr; she was perfectly well received there, was seated next to Madame de Maintenon, and has laid in an additional stock of praises and news. She will return there with me tomorrow; we wait for an answer, for the throng is so great, that I shall not think I am going till I am really upon the road. I informed you of what Madame de Coulanges said to Madame d'Estrées; the scene passed at M. de Croissi's; the whole company burst into a laugh, which disconcerted the Maréchale, and emboldened Madame de Coulanges, who said in a low voice to M. de Charost: "Think of her never praising Madame de Grignan any more than *Esther*." Presently the conversation turned upon M. de Charost's flames. Madame de Coulanges mentioned Madame de Brissac [2], and you. His taste was approved, and *poor man*! was reiterated. Madame d'Es-

[1] Marie-Marguerite Morin, wife of Jean, Comte d'Estrées, Maréchal and Vice-Admiral of France.

[2] Gabrielle-Louise de Saint-Simon, Duchesse de Brissac, died February 24, 1684.

trées was applauding Madame de Brissac's wit, when Madame de Coulanges observed, "that as to wit, Madame de Grignan was as much superior to her, as Madame de Brissac's eyes were superior to Madame de Grignan's." Everyone agreed in this, and Madame d'Estrées was again disconcerted. Canaples afterwards said, he had never seen anything at all to be compared to you in beauty, that Madame de Mazarin was of the same opinion, and that he had heard her say twenty times, that of all the faces she had ever seen, none pleased her so much as yours; that you had every grace, and every charm: this again was agreed to. Madame d'Estrées did not dare open her mouth, and this mute lioness, *with her paws across*, like the one you formerly saw, appeared so novel a prodigy, that no one could help talking of it, and Madame de Coulanges was complimented for a miracle, which nothing but her vivacity could have wrought. Madame d'Estrées complained, in a whisper, of the reproach she had received about *Esther*, and that it was intended as an affront. It must be owned, indeed, that Madame de Coulanges is an ungrateful woman, for the Maréchale never tore her eyes out.

The Chevalier has written to you respecting England; we expect to hear what they have done, after having said that their King was no longer a King from the time he left the kingdom; we want to know whether they have elected another.

Nine o'clock at night.

At length we have received some news from England, which is very favourable. The Prince of Orange is not yet master: things are not done in such haste, and war will not be declared in a moment, as it was supposed. It will not be so dreadful this year, as we are only upon the defensive: but you will have many pangs, many needless apprehensions, and you will not be diverted from them; you will not for a moment turn aside from the *dragons*, which I see are ready to devour you, and which, on your account,

almost devour me; but our dragons will not bite, for I find, my dearest child, that I shall go into Brittany with Madame de Chaulnes; many reasons induce me to take this journey, besides those which gratify my heart. I must necessarily make some arrangements about the estate I have there, and which will dwindle to nothing, unless the capacity of the Abbé Charrier and my presence can restore it. I must therefore have the courage to undertake this journey, at the risk of my life, and the price of my affection, which would naturally make me fly, my dear Comtesse, to you.

LETTER 855

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, February 21, 1689.

It is certain that we are separated from each other by a grievous distance: this is enough to make us shudder; but what would it have been, if I had added to it the road from hence to *The Rocks* or to Rennes? This, however, will not take place so soon. Madame de Chaulnes wishes to see the termination of several affairs, and I am only afraid she will set out too late, considering my intention of returning next winter, which I must do for several reasons; the first of which is, that I am convinced M. de Grignan will be obliged to return on account of his Knighthood, and you cannot take a better opportunity to escape from your falling, uninhabitable Castle, and come and pay your court a little with the Knight of the Order, who will not be a Knight till that time. I paid mine the other day at St.-Cyr, much more agreeably than I expected. We, that is, Madame de Coulanges, Madame de Bagnols, the Abbé Têtu, and I, went on Saturday. We found our places kept; an officer told Madame de Coulanges, that Madame de Maintenon had ordered a place for her next

herself: you see what honour is paid her. "You, Madame," said he, "may choose." I placed myself with Madame de Bagnols, in the second row behind the Duchesses. Maréchal de Bellefonds came, and placed himself by choice at my right hand, and before us were the Duchesses d'Auvergne, de Coislin, and de Sully. The Maréchal and I listened to the tragedy with an attention that was remarked, and bestowed some praises in a low voice, that were very well placed. I cannot tell you the extreme beauty of this piece: it is a performance not easy to represent, and is inimitable: it is the union of music, poetry, singing, and character, so perfect and complete, that there is nothing we wish to alter. The young ladies who represent kings and great personages, seem to be made on purpose. It commands attention, and the only unpleasant circumstance attending it is, that so fine a production should at last end. Everything in it is simple and innocent, sublime and affecting: the sacred history is so faithfully adhered to, as to create respect; all the airs corresponding with the words, which are taken from the *Psalms* or *Ecclesiastes*, and inter-woven with the subject, are singularly beautiful; the taste and attention of the audience are the criterions of the merit of the piece. I was delighted with it, and so was the Maréchal, who left his place to inform the King how much he was gratified, and that he was seated next to a lady, who was very worthy of seeing *Esther*. The King approached our seat, and having turned round, addressed himself to me: "I am told, Madame," said he, "that the piece has given you satisfaction." I replied, with perfect self-possession, "Sire, I am delighted; what I feel is beyond the power of words to describe." The King continued, "Racine has great talents." I replied, "Sire, he has indeed; and so have these young people: they enter into the subject, as if it had been their sole employment." "Ah! that is very true," he rejoined. And he then retired, leaving me the object of universal envy. As I was almost the only new spectator, the King took pleasure in observing my genuine admiration, which

was without noise or parade [1]. The Prince and Princesse came and spoke a word to me; Madame de Maintenon flashed upon me like lightning, and then retired with the King. I answered everyone, being in one of my happiest moods. We returned at night with flambeaux. I supped at Madame de Coulanges's, to whom the King had also spoken with an air of affability that made him appear fascinating. I saw the Chevalier at night. I related to him very naturally my little felicities, being unwilling to conceal them without a reason, as some people do. He was pleased, and here I conclude upon this head. I am sure he did not afterwards find in me any ridiculous vanity, or the transports of a vulgar country bumpkin. Ask him. M. de Meaux (*Bossuet*) talked to me a good deal about you, and so did the Prince. I pitied you for not being present; but how was it possible? one cannot be everywhere. You were at your opera at Marseilles. As *Atys* is not only too happy, but too charming, it is impossible you could have been tired with it. Pauline must have been surprised at such a spectacle; she has no right to wish for a more perfect one. I have so pleasing an idea of Marseilles, that I am persuaded you are amused there; and I will back the dissipations of that place against those of Aix.

But on that very Saturday, after the representation of *Esther*, the King was informed of the death of the young Queen of Spain [2], who was carried off in two days,

[1] By mentioning the circumstance to which she believed she was indebted for this little favour of the King, she proves sufficiently that she was not so much elated with it as has been pretended.

[2] Marie-Louise d'Orléans, daughter of MONSIEUR, and of Henrietta-Anne of England, his first wife.

Madame de La Fayette says in her *Memoirs*, that the Queen of Spain was poisoned by a cup of chocolate. Dangeau affirms that it was by an eel pie. MADAME, in her *Lettres Originales*, maintains that the poison was communicated by raw oysters.

Voltaire has denied this poisoning, as well as several others. It was a system of the historian. But he only confutes Dangeau's account, who had said, that three of the Queen's women had died in consequence of eating of the same dish. Against this detail, he brings forward respectable authority.

Madame de La Fayette, who, in *The Life of Madame* (Henrietta

by a violent vomiting: this has very much the air of foul play. The King informed MONSIEUR of it the next day, which was yesterday; great was the grief upon the occasion; MADAME wept bitterly, and the King retired in a flood of tears.

It is said there is good news from England; not only the Prince of Orange is not elected King or Protector; but he is given to understand, that he and his troops have nothing to do but return: this shortens our solicitude. If this news should gain ground, our Brittany will be in less agitation, and my son will not have the mortification of commanding the nobility of the Viscounty of Rennes, and the Barony of Vitré. They have chosen him, against his will, to be at their head. Any one else would be greatly elated with this honour; but he is vexed at it, not liking, under any title whatever, to take the field in that way.

Your son went to Versailles, to amuse himself during the carnival; but he found the Court in grief for the Queen of Spain. He would have returned ere this, if his uncle

of England), had not dared to confirm the opinion of her having died by poison, joined with Voltaire in that of the Queen of Spain, daughter of this Princess.

The evidence of Madame (de Bavière) would be stronger, if she were not so partial, and did not show herself so ready to give credit to every crime. What she adds, that it was two of the Queen's French waiting women who poisoned her, is very improbable.

She says, however, that it was the Earl of Mansfield who procured the poison; a circumstance which agrees with the common report of that period.

In fact, all the Letters and Memoirs of contemporary writers agree in saying, that the Council of Spain, devoted to the Emperor and the Prince of Orange, and resolved to enter into the league against France, wished to remove a Queen, who was too good a Frenchwoman, and who, governing her husband, was too great an obstacle to the projects of war that had been formed.

It is true, that such a report, at the moment of the breaking out of hostilities, cannot pass for an historical proof; but it must be owned, that it very nearly resembles truth.

We may also say, that the recital of the Duc de St.-Simon, who had been Ambassador in Spain, not only confirms that of MADAME, but adds many circumstances to it. According to him, the Comtesse de Soissons, who was then at Madrid, administered the poison, suborned by the Earl of Mansfield. (See note of Letter 430, of 26th June, 1676, in the third volume, on the death of the first MADAME.

were not upon the point of going to meet him. This is a very melancholy and mournful carnival. I supped last night at M. Le Camus's, where I met the Duchesse du Lude, Madame de Coulanges, Madame de St.-Germain, the Chevalier de Grignan, M. de Troyes, and Corbinelli. We were very gay; talked of you with great regard, esteem, and regret for your absence; in short, with a lively remembrance of you: you will come and renew these feelings.

Madame de Durfort is dying of a malignant fever, and Madame de La Vieuville of the small-pox. Adieu, my beloved child; of all the provincial Commanders, be assured M. de Grignan's situation is the best.

LETTER 856

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Ash-Wednesday, February 23, 1689.

My dear child, the life you lead at Marseilles delights me. I love that city, which resembles no other in the world. Ah! how well I understand Pauline's admiration! How natural, how just, how novel, all her surprise must be! How pretty I think her! how pleasing to me is the mind which my fancy gives her! It seems to me that I love her, and that you do not love her enough. You want her to be all perfection. Did she engage for this when she left her convent? You are not just: who is there without faults? Do you, in conscience, expect her to be free from them? Whence can this hope arise? It is not in nature: you wish her then to be a *prodigious* prodigy, such as was never before seen. If I were with you, I think I should do her some good offices, merely by correcting your imagination a little, and by asking you, if a young girl, who thinks of nothing but pleasing you and improving herself, who loves and fears you, and who has a great share of understanding, is not in the first rank of excel-

lence? These are the dictates of my heart in favour of my dear Pauline, whom I love, and whom I entreat you immediately to embrace, for my sake. Add to this her good conscience, which makes her renounce the compact, when she sees the jugglers perform their necromancies. This life, though agreeable, must have fatigued you: it is too much for you, my dear child; you go to bed late, and you rise early: I have had apprehensions for your health. The reason I do not talk to you of mine is, that it is as I wish yours to be, and that I have nothing to say upon the subject.

You think of me always too kindly: your reasonings are good respecting my journey into Brittany; I will consider of it; and if Madame de Chaulnes does not go—for how can we tell? we must see how the orders stand—if she does not go, I will go by myself to Nantes, where I will send for the Abbé Charrier, as it is impossible to leave the estate there any longer in its present confusion. We have time enough to consider, till Easter, for we shall not think of setting out during Lent. I believe I told you that we supped last Sunday at M. Le Camus's, the Lieutenant of Police: on Monday we supped in a friendly way at M. de Lamoignon's, with Coulanges, and the Abbé Bigorre; on Tuesday at Madame de Coulanges's with Madame de Chaulnes and *the Divinities*, without ceremony, and retired at eleven. This morning I was at mass, and am now writing quietly to my beloved child. Such is the life of your poor mamma, whilst the Chevalier and *Puss* are at Versailles, where all amusements have ceased, out of respect to the sorrow of MONSIEUR and MADAME[1]. This poor Queen of Spain, a year older than her mother, has died, in a strange manner, as she did: she was taken, on the tenth of this month, with such an excessive vomiting, that no medicine could afford her relief, and till the twelfth at noon, when she died, she had not a moment's respite. M. de Rebenac writes, that nothing is more

[1] Elisabeth-Charlotte, Palatine of the Rhine, mother-in-law of the Queen of Spain.

worthy of admiration than her courage, resolution, and sentiments of Christianity; that she told the King she had no regret at quitting life, that she was dying a natural death, though she had just before said otherwise, like the late MADAME [1]; but, like her too, she repented having said so: in short, no mention is made of poison; a word that is forbidden at Versailles, and throughout France: but the poor Princess is dead, and this is a real loss in the present state of our affairs. Those of England are strangely spoken of; after great opposition, that madman, the Prince of Orange, is elected King, and has been crowned: the contrary report prevailed a week ago; but thus it is with the English.

Madame de La Vieuville [2] is dead of a mortification, surprised, no doubt, to find herself so soon by the side of her father-in-law at the Minimes (of the Place Royale).

LETTER 857

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, February 25, 1689.

Our two Grignans returned from Versailles, an hour after I sealed my letter. The Chevalier will inform you how this little Captain took his leave, how graciously the King regarded him, and how he was questioned respecting his corps, and his journey to Châlons. He will have the honour of departing the first, and of setting the example. This zeal in a young novice is very becoming; he jests very prettily with those who ask why he goes so soon; he tells them he has a Colonel who drives him; the Colonel [3] defends himself very well on his part; and I can assure you nothing can be better, or do them so much honour at so little expense. He has no business here: he is delighted,

[1] See the note to the preceding letter.

[2] Anne-Lucie de La Mothe-Houdancourt.

[3] The Chevalier de Grignan.

and eager to become a good officer; he will have time enough to rest himself at Philippeville, and his horses also; and he will be quite fresh when he begins to march. I am become quite avaricious of this *Puss*; which, you know, is always the case when the time of departure draws near. He takes his meals with me; I shall take him to dine with Madame de Chaulnes and Madame de Coulanges, to bid them adieu, and shall husband the seven or eight days we have still to be together. Now, my dear child, do not ramble to a distance to seek anxiety; do not allow your fancy to make you uneasy; there is no reason for it at present: your son will be as well in his garrison as here; it is but fifty leagues off.

Talk to me of yourself, my dear love: your life at Marseilles appeared to me very agreeable. For my part, I acknowledge I should not have sense enough to be dull and weary in the midst of the sincere demonstrations of respect you receive in your government: the Chevalier and I never agree upon this head. I know that this must be too much for a constancy, and you must come and shake it off a little in this part of the world: but I have many in my eye, who would not think these honours, paid once a year by persons of rank and quality, at all disagreeable. I have seen them, and have been surprised and affected: but everyone has his taste. I will stake the pretty whirlwind of Marseilles, with the Knights [1], the opera, and the jugglers, not forgetting Pauline's astonishment, against the visits and the ladies of Aix. Tell me who are your Ladies of the Bedchamber; for there are always favourites.

The King of England is going over to Ireland; this, at least, is the report: but I vouch for nothing this year; it is the harvest of lies. The Court goes into mourning to-day for the Queen of Spain. I shall finish this letter to-night, after I have received yours.

[1] When Madame de Sévigné was at Marseilles in 1672, she considered the numerous officers of the galleys (almost all Knights of Malta, who came to see M. de Grignan), as one of the chief ornaments of that city.

Here comes your letter of the eighteenth, my dear child; but say nothing to M. de Grignan, for he would laugh at me. I am delighted to find that you have arrived at Aix; I recollect there is a vile precipice which extends a great way along the road, and which makes me ill to think of it. Your leagues are insupportable; it is as far from Marseilles to Aix, as it is from Paris to Meaux; this, I maintain; I therefore thank you for informing me of your safe arrival. You must have been very much fatigued in having to sup with the Archbishop, instead of going to bed. I am sensible of the pleasure you give M. de Grignan, by appearing in public with so good a grace: this complaisance entitles you to as much from him. He was fearful here that you should bury yourself at home, and be plunged in grief; but I said to him, "Let her alone, Sir, she will do nothing amiss, nor anything ridiculous:" and, in fact, the manner in which you live is noble and full of good sense, considering the situation you are in. How do all these wonders agree with you? for they must be attended with some bodily pain. I persevere in the resolution of going into Brittany, though my heart strongly inclines me to visit you: but I am not worthy of being your mother; you would have been a true Roman, with the love you bear your country. Adieu, my best love, adieu, my dearest child. I could write till to-morrow; my ideas, my pen, my ink, everything flies; but my letter must go to the post, and I must not overwhelm you.

The King of England has dined here with M. de Lauzun; after dinner he visited MADEMOISELLE. It is said he is going over to Ireland, and that he has given the Order of the Garter to M. de Lauzun. I shall answer for nothing this year, but that I love you dearly.

LETTER 858

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, February 28, 1689.

The Chevalier went yesterday to Versailles to know his fate; for, not finding himself in the lists that have appeared, he is anxious to know, whether he is reserved for the Dauphin's army, which has not yet been mentioned. As he has said that he was capable of serving, he has a right to think that he has not been forgotten; at all events it will not be his fault; he is one of the best. It is certain that the King of England set out this morning for Ireland, where he is expected with impatience: he will be better there than here. He will traverse Brittany with the swiftness of lightning; and go straight to Brest, where he will find Maréchal d'Estrées, and ships and frigates ready: he takes with him five hundred thousand crowns. The King has given him sufficient arms for ten thousand men. As his Britannic Majesty took leave, he said with a smile, "That arms for himself were the only things that had been forgotten:" our King gave him his: the heroes of romance never did anything more gallant than this action. What will not this brave but unhappy King do, with arms that have ever been victorious? Behold him then with the casque and cuirass of Rinoldo and Amadis, and all our most celebrated Knights errant; I will not say of Hector, for he was unfortunate. There is not an offer that can be suggested, that our King has not made him; generosity and magnanimity have been carried to their height. M. d'Avaux [1] is to go with him; he set out two days ago. You will ask why M. de Barillon [2] was not the person. The reason is, that M. d'Avaux, being perfectly acquainted with the affairs of Holland, will be more useful, than he

[1] Jean-Antoine de Mesmes, Comte d'Avaux, nephew of Claude de Mesmes, also Comte d'Avaux, both celebrated for their superior talents in negotiation, and for uncommon qualities of heart and mind.

[2] M. de Barillon had been Ambassador to England.

who is acquainted only with those of England[1]. The Queen has shut herself up at Poissi with her son: she will be near the King, and the fountain-head of intelligence. She is overwhelmed with grief, and suffers from a nephritic complaint, that makes it feared she has the stone: she is really to be pitied. You see, my dear child, it is the rage of talking, that makes me write all this; the Chevalier and the *Gazette* will give you better information than I can do. Your son has lived with me; I never leave him, and he is satisfied. He is going to take leave of the little Mesdemoiselles de Castelnau; but his heart has yet no attractions: his duty and his regiment take up all his time; he is delighted at the thoughts of going, and of setting the example to others. There is no particular object yet in view, no place to be besieged, nor any battle to be fought; we are only to stand upon the defensive; but then so powerfully upon the defensive, as to make our enemies tremble: never did a King of France see three hundred thousand men on foot: such spectacles were confined to the Kings of Persia; everything is new, everything miraculous.

I went with the Marquis yesterday to take leave of Madame de La Fayette, and to sup with Madame de Coulanges. I sometimes take him to M. de Pomponne's, sometimes to Madame de Vins's, and the Marquise d'Uxelles's: to-morrow he will go to Madame du Pui-du-Fou's and Madame de Lavardin's; and will then wait for his uncle, and set out towards the end of the week. But, my dear child, do not be cast down at this journey, for it merits no other name at present. Let us talk a little of Pauline, my pretty amiable little grand-daughter: I could never have supposed she was of an untoward disposition, I thought her all sweetness. But do not dishearten her; she has sense, she loves you, she loves herself; she wishes to please;

[1] The reason assigned here for the preference that was given to M. d'Avaux, is not the true one: d'Avaux had the merit of having foreseen and announced every event that happened, whereas de Barillon had the misfortune to be wrong in everything; this was the real cause of the preference.

this is the way to amendment, and I assure you it is not in childhood that we correct ourselves: this is the work of reason; vanity, so fatal in many instances, is admirable in this. Endeavour therefore to reason with her, without anger, without scolding, without humbling her, for these are revolting, and I will answer for it, that you will make her a little prodigy. Consider this as an affair of honour and conscience; teach her to be clever; it is a great thing to have inclination and capacity, which she has.

Esther is not yet printed. I had a great desire to say a word or two about you to Madame de Maintenon; it was at my tongue's end: she advanced a step or two to speak to me; but as the King, after what I told you had passed, withdrew to his apartment, she followed him. I had only time to evince my thanks and acknowledgment by gestures: it was a whirlwind. M. de Meaux inquired after your health. I said to the Prince as he passed, "How I pity those who are not here!" he heard me, but everything was in such bustle, that it was impossible to arrange an idea. Racine is going to write another tragedy; the King has acquired a taste for theatrical productions, and nothing else will be seen: but the history of *Esther* is singular; neither *Judith* [1], *Ruth*, nor any other subject, could succeed so well.

Madame de Chaulnes is gone to Versailles; perhaps she is to assist her sister-in-law [2] in receiving the Queen at Poissi. Nothing has yet transpired with respect to Brittany, we must wait till the Commandant is appointed [3]. You are very happy that no one comes to assist you in the execution of your office. M. de Grignan will give chase

[1] The Abbé Têtu gave Boyer the subject of *Judith*, and even assisted him in a work worthy of the charming epigram of Racine, ending with these lines:

> Je pleure, hélas! pour ce pauvre Holoferne,
> Si mechamment mis à mort par Judith.
>
> I weep, alas, for this poor Holofernes,
> So wickedly put to death by Judith. [Translation.]

[2] Charlotte d'Ailli, sister of M. de Chaulnes, Prioress of Poissi.

[3] The Duc de Chaulnes, or Maréchal d'Estrées.

to those demons [1], who issue from the mountains, and then return to their holes. There are many in Languedoc; M. de Broglio [2] and M. de Basville [3] are in pursuit of them; they disappear like ghosts; you likewise see armies in the Provinces, that will not be of the least utility.

The King of England yesterday invested M. de Lauzun with the Order of the Garter; a kind of oath was read, which constitutes the ceremony; the King placed his collar on the other side of ours, and a St. George, that he had from the late King his father, which is set with diamonds, and worth at least ten thousand crowns. While the King of England was at MADEMOISELLE'S, M. de Lauzun went to Madame de La Fayette's with this ornament; Madame de La Fayette gazed at the *blue ribbon*, and as she knew he had not that of France, she did not comprehend this masquerade; she was silent upon the subject, and so was he. At length he began to laugh, and told her what had passed. The King of England must, however, think himself obliged to him, since he treats him so well. The King told M. de Lauzun, that this Order was not to exclude his own: he will therefore, that they may not cross each other, put the order of France under his coat, and let the St. George hang to his side by a blue ribbon. This little man's star is very extraordinary.

Eight o'clock at night.

I am just returned from M. de Pomponne's; I have heard him reason upon the present state of affairs, he thinks that all the high mountains are coming to a level. The Irish business goes on admirably, and so completely occupies the Prince of Orange, that there is nothing to fear upon our coasts. Even the Lords, who have elected the Prince of Orange against their will, have protested against the violence of the Lower House, alleging that a King cannot be elected until the throne be juridically de-

[1] The Huguenots.

[2] Commandant in Languedoc.

[3] Controller of Languedoc.

clared vacant. All this is very good; no vigorous measures need be taken: if Spain were to declare, we should arm rather upon the side of Pampelune and Navarre than of Flanders, as this would be a most certain means of gaining the latter. In short, it appears that we are so strong and so powerful, that we have nothing to do but to keep in our places, and make a good appearance. Let this be your mode of reasoning, till, at least, you see something to the contrary, and let not your trouble begin too soon; it is a pity to waste your grief in this manner. I wished you had been present at this conversation. This is all the news I have heard. The Chevalier will come to-morrow. The Abbé Bigorre has just informed me that the President Barentin fell down dead this morning while sitting in his place in the Grand Council. Adieu, dear child; do not amuse yourself by answering me with a long letter. Consider how many sentences there are to which you have only to say *Amen*. I have a thousand friendly compliments for you from M. de Lamoignon, Madame de Lavardin, and Madame de Mouci; everyone is still proud of your remembrance.

LETTER 859

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, March 2, 1689.

Shrove-Tuesday is not an indifferent day to Pauline: I cannot help scolding you, my dear child, for not having sent her prettily to the good Langlée's, to dance a little with Mademoiselle d'Oraison: what harm would there have been in allowing her this little pastime? I am sure this dear child is interesting, that she has a good air, a good carriage, and even eclipses more regular beauties. I scold you also for reading all your letters before you go to bed. I know it is scarcely possible to keep them till the next day; but you must calculate upon not sleeping,

for there will often be many things in them that will create disagreeable thoughts; nor would it be a whit better, if they contained nothing but reflections and news: before the imagination has sifted the contents, the night is gone: as you know all this to be true, settle the matter for the benefit of your health. I took my Marquis yesterday to Madame du Pui-du-Fou's; she grows very old. M. de Mirepoix, who had been there once before to see me, came a second time, and each time his whole conversation turned upon his condescension in marrying to please his family. The little puppet is dying of the spleen in this dreary abode. I afterwards went to Madame de Lavardin's, to whom I remembered you: she embraced your son several times: she loves you dearly, and so does Madame de Mouci; but this last is in the third heaven; she has lost a sister, who was a nun, for whom she had very little regard: I shall make your compliments to her and her learned brother [1]. The Chevalier arrived last night, and is very well; he will be employed, but he knows not yet in what country; I admire his courage. Your son is a very agreeable and a very pretty fellow; he already manages all his affairs, gives orders, makes purchases, and keeps his accounts: it is a pity his father had not done the same. The Chevalier will inform you what our King said to the King of England at his taking leave; "Sir, it is with grief I see you depart; yet I never wish to see you again: but if you return, be assured you will find me the same as you leave me." Could anything better have been said? He has loaded him with everything, great and small; two millions of money, ships, frigates, troops, officers, and M. d'Avaux, who makes, upon the occasion, one of the most brilliant figures in the world: I will venture to say, that there is no one who would not be proud of the employment, who would not think it worthy of a man thoroughly acquainted with business, and capable of giving advice: if M. de Barillon is not sensible of this, he is very happy. I now come

[1] Achille de Harlay, then Attorney-General, and afterwards first President in the Parliament of Paris, in November, 1689.

to the minutiæ, such as toilets, camp-beds, services of plate, plain and gilt, arms for his person, which are the King's; arms for the troops in Ireland, and those who go with him, who are very numerous; in short, generosity, magnificence, and magnanimity, were never so strikingly displayed as upon this occasion. The King is not willing that the Queen should go to Poissi: she will see very little company; but the King will take care of her, and she will receive news without intermission. The parting of the King and Queen of England rent the hearts of all the spectators; nothing but tears, sighs, lamentations, and swoonings, were to be seen or heard, which is very easy to be comprehended. Such is his destiny; he has a good cause; he is the Protector of the true religion, and his courage will allow him no other alternative than conquest or death.

Did I inform you, that the President Barentin died upon his seat in the Grand Council two days ago? He dropped down dead suddenly. Will his wife, who laughs incessantly, laugh on this occasion? The good La Troche is dead; write to his wife. Madame de Nesle is brought to bed of a son; I know not whether the *woodcock*[1] is pleased with it, for she has now no love for anyone but the Comte de Mailly, who is gone with the King of England to Brest: this office would have done honour to a Duc or a Prince. M. de Duras has been received as a Duc in Parliament, and is about to command the finest army that ever was seen in France.

I am just returned from Madame de La Fayette's, where I found M. Courtin, M. de La Trousse, and the Duc d'Estrées: the conversation was political. M. d'Avaux is Ambassador Extraordinary to the King of England: he has the care of the troops and the finances; in short, he is the soul of the undertaking, and the man in whom all confidence is placed. I dined with your son at Madame de Chaulnes's, who desires to be remembered to you in the kindest manner; we shall not set out till after

[1] Jeanne de Monchi, grandmother of the Marquis de Nesle, and mother of Louis, Comte de Mailly.

Easter. Ah, my dear child, nothing attracts me to Brittany but business alone; neither my son, nor his wife, is now at *The Rocks*; they have an attachment to Rennes, where their mother is. My son will, perhaps, be with these noblemen. The retirement and solitude of *The Rocks* are no longer agreeable to them; they will remain there out of complaisance to me, and I shall give them all their liberty in the month of October. I have not the least doubt that you will come this winter to Paris with M. de Grignan; I shall, however, be with you, be it where it may. I think M. de La Rochefoucauld's *Maxim* is true, which says, "Afflictions are thrown equally into every condition of life:" some, however, appear very grievous. My dear child, adieu: you make me laugh, when you say you have no longer any wit; you imagine you have no further occasion for it; but knock ever so gently at that door, and you will find it answered. Do not find fault with your letters, they abound with happy turns and brilliant ideas. I embrace you a thousand times.

*LETTER 860

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

Wednesday, March 2, 1689.

What things, Sir, may not be said! what a period in the history of our monarch is the manner in which he has received the King of England! the presents with which he has loaded him in setting out from hence for Ireland; vessels at Brest, where he now is, frigates, troops, officers; the Comte d'Avaux as Ambassador Extraordinary and adviser, and who is also to have the care of the troops and money; two millions on his departure, and as much afterwards as he wants! Besides these great things, he has given him his arms, his helmet, his cuirass, which cannot fail of bringing good fortune to him. He has given him

arms sufficient for ten or twelve thousand men. And as to little conveniences, they are innumerable: post-chaises admirably made, calashes, carriage and saddle horses, services of gold and silver, toilets, linen, camp-beds, magnificent swords of State, swords for service, pistols; in short, everything of every kind that can be thought of; and in embracing him as he bid him adieu, he said to him, "You cannot say that I am not affected at your departure: I own to you, however, that I wish never to see you again: but if, unfortunately, you should return, be assured you will find me as you leave me." Nothing could be better said, nothing more just: generosity, magnificence, magnanimity, were never exercised as they have been by His Majesty on this occasion.

We hope that the Irish war will be a powerful diversion, and prevent the Prince of Orange from tormenting us, by descents upon our coast; and thus our three hundred thousand soldiers, our armies so well stationed everywhere, will only serve to make the King feared, without anyone daring to attack him.

This is a time of political discussion: I should very much like to hear you talk over these great events. I enclose the opinion of a respectable upholsterer on the questions of Madame de Moulceau: but, whatever he may say of a gold fringe and double taffetas for furnishings, and though there are many such here, nothing is so pretty, so suitable, or so cool for the summer, as these beautiful taffetas, all similar, and tapestry the same also. I have seen them at several houses, and admire them exceedingly: everything must be looped up, and plaited, as he has directed: for other kind of furnishings, you must have damask or brocade.

Our *friend* will give you an account himself of what he knows, but what it is I do not know; for, since he has resided here, I never see him; and when I ask him the reason of this, he replies, that I am *too near*. This pleasantry is a truth. If I did not sometimes contrive to stumble upon him, when he is leaving the house to attend one or

other of the three or four dinners to which he is daily invited, he would be a stranger to my eyes. I am obliged to wish him again at the Faubourg de St.-Germain, to resume the intercourse that has subsisted between us for more than thirty years. In this conduct, Sir, is there anything that any jealousy can lay hold of? Yours will be fully satisfied.

M. de La Trousse has taken a milk diet all the winter, and is much better: it is supposed he will have a separate command in Poitou. There are three hundred thousand infantry, and altogether five or six armies; but no one yet knows precisely what post he is to have: my daughter's is in Provence, mine will soon be in Brittany.

The little Marquis has a beautiful corps in his uncle's regiment: and I shall everywhere preserve for you the truest esteem, accompanied by a regard which must make the jealous tremble.

M. DE CORBINELLI *also writes to the President* DE MOULCEAU.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter.*)

I reside at the Carnavalet Mansion, purely to revenge myself upon you; but it must surprise you to read that I never see her, now I live in the same house with her. I hope you do not believe this, for it is incredible; and that you will consider the charge as a wicked artifice. The public news is important, and worthy of your attention; but as I am accustomed to impute every event to God, I admire him equally in all, and look no where else. Adieu, my friend; I am wholly yours; jealous, or tranquil, it is all the same.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *concludes this letter.*

A thousand respects to your lady; I wish I could render her greater service.

Does Madame d'Omelas dislike the action that is to be brought against her?

LETTER 861

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, March 4, 1689.

The Chevalier and I have been uneasy, since we have found at what time you receive our letters, knowing that if you read them before you go to bed, we affectionately prevent you from sleeping, just three times a week. Tell us the truth; if you do not, we shall keep to this opinion. It is impossible, after having read our volumes, supposing they even contained nothing dismal or disagreeable, to avoid thinking upon the news we send you: less than this is sufficient to deprive a person of sleep, whose rest is so easily destroyed as yours: and, if the quick circulation of your blood, and the keen air of Provence, be taken into the account, you will find, that those who love you most in the world, make you ill, and stab you regularly every post-day. This idea, my dear child, is too well founded, not to make me uneasy, and admire what injury our love may occasion to those who are the dearest to us. This, however, is an evil without a remedy, and which must be left to God, like everything else.

M. de Lauzun has refused, it is said, to go to Ireland with the King of England, but he has hinted, that he might be induced to go, if he were created a Duc. It is certain that Their Majesties of St.-Germain spoke of this; I doubt whether this sort of bargaining may not be detrimental to M. de Lauzun.

Your dear child is again to-day giving orders about all his affairs. He is in high spirits, and will set out to-morrow, with the finest weather in the world: though it be only a journey, I cannot help feeling a weight at my heart. I saw Jarzé yesterday; he is cheerful, notwithstanding his misfortune [1]; he conversed with me for nearly

[1] The Marquis de Jarzé had his hand taken off by a cannon-shot at the siege of Philisbourg.

two hours, and related to me all his melancholy adventure. The King asked him the particulars, from beginning to end; it is a very piteous story; he has suffered a great deal, and still feels pain in the hand he has lost.

We have just received your letters of the twenty-fifth; you are very much disgusted with the vile sermons: you have, indeed, great reason; it is a martyrdom; in this respect, your dignity is somewhat inconvenient: but must you attend every day? This is a hardship; I will lay your complaints before Father Gaillard. I sometimes go to hear the sermons at St.-Gervais, with Madame de Coulanges, who never loses one; Father Soanen [1] is an excellent preacher. Father Gaillard [2] shines at St.-Germain de l'Auxerrois; but where do they obtain such preachers as hold forth in your country? You cannot hesitate with regard to your returning at Martinmas; for instead of going back to Lambesc and Aix, you must come and defend your petition; you alone can do it; arrange everything for that purpose. I cannot tell you how to act; but as you have long subsisted on impossibilities, you must again take from this miraculous stock: you see plainly, that you must not leave your work imperfect. I shall then set out with the pleasing hope of seeing you in the winter; this delightful prospect will comfort me during a journey that I certainly do not take for pleasure.

So you want to persuade me, that you have lost all your wit, and that you are now incapable of writing! but your letters do not convince me; you must give me other proofs, as Bussy said. I embrace my dear daughter, and my daughter's daughter: ah, good heavens! this is going

[1] Jean Soanen, a celebrated preacher of the Oratory, afterwards Bishop of Senez. It was he who, more than thirty years afterwards, was condemned by the Council of Embrun, over which Cardinal de Tencin presided, an assembly as ridiculous as its President was calumniated. Soanen was a very obstinate Jansenist, but, with this exception, a very respectable man. "This Council, this sentence, and particularly the President of the Council offended all France; and, at the end of two days, not a syllable was said upon the subject." Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV.*

[2] A celebrated Jesuit preacher.

a great way: never bring old age or sickness upon yourself; you know where this throws me. The Chevalier sends you *Esther*; let us have your opinion of it.

We shuddered at the horrid story of the criminal; what a shocking death! this man is certainly summoned to the torments of hell: we may say, with St. Augustin, "If he had been one of us, he would have remained with us." I wish, however, that a few days had been allowed him for repentance, if he would have repented: it is a dreadful thing to be strangled in the midst of blasphemies.

LETTER 862

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, March 7, 1689.

If you had seen your dear son set out on Saturday, you would have wept as well as we; it was impossible to help it; but as there is yet no talk of hostilities, we ought to consider it merely as a journey. He looked well, and was in good spirits; he laughed at us, for he is wholly taken up with his corps, which is in very good condition. M. du Plessis is gone with him, and will take particular care of him, till he has delivered him into the hands of his uncle's officers. All the young people follow the good example of your son; I advise you to take courage like the rest, and to believe that God will preserve him to you: you stand in need of some resolution to complete the business relative to M. d'Aiguebonne; this thorn in your son's foot must be removed. You may still see a part of the things which you regretted you could not see. Racine is beginning a new piece for next winter: it is either *Jephtha* or *Absalom*[1]. You will go to St.-Cyr, and see M. de Grignan received into the Order of Knighthood; you will, at least, find the Queen of England, who will make up to you

[1] It was neither; it was *Athalia,* Racine's last production, and his best.

for not seeing her husband; and, if it please God, we shall meet again, after having each made our circuit. I can easily conceive that you will feel our separation; I shall feel it very keenly on my side, I assure you. I consider this Brittany as a long stretch, a tiresome journey, to which business impels me. We shall not set out till after Easter. If we meet with anything that will do for your son, we shall not fail to obtain it: in short, we shall see what Providence has in store for us.

LETTER 863

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, March 9, 1689.

Mademoiselle d'Alerac is gone for a few days to the Feuillantines; there is frequently a coolness between her and Madame d'Usèz [1]; I believe, however, she will return with this Duchesse to Versailles: the poor girl is not happy, her stars are not so propitious as those of Mademoiselle de Coislin [2], who seems at present perfectly well disposed towards M. d'Enrichemont; the marriage articles were signed on Monday, conditionally, that if one article were not altered, the contract should be void. It was thought prudent not to return without signing them, lest the world should laugh at their expense; and this plan was adopted, which appears a very strange step, on the day a whole family is assembled, and when everything in general is satisfactory. M. de Coislin is extremely happy in expedients in time of need. A courier was, however, dispatched to Rome upon this occasion [3].

M. de Grignan's letter has made me tremble, for I

[1] Julie-Marie de Sainte-Maure, Duchesse d'Usèz, first cousin of Mademoiselle d'Alerac.

[2] Madeleine-Armande du Cambout, daughter of Armand du Cambout, Duc de Coislin.

[3] To obtain dispensations.

can neither bear the sight nor the thought of a precipice; how horrible, that he will have to pass over one, and be continually within a hair's breadth of a shocking death! I do not comprehend how he can be induced to go into a country, where the very bears cannot exist. The Mesdemoiselles de La Charce are, indeed, very pleasantly situated; what a charming house! But what grieves me is, that I fear these *demons* (the Huguenots), who disappear when they are terrified, and see M. de Grignan, will start up again with the same alacrity as soon as he is gone; in which case, he would have this unpleasant business continually upon his hands. The King, in reality, is well served: neither life nor fortune is considered, when his pleasure is the question. If we were as well disposed towards God, we should be saints indeed.

The Chevalier and I have been laughing at the difficulty we had to understand why, at Versailles, you returned home to say your prayers. "What does she mean?" we asked each other. "Do you understand this?" "No." "Nor do I." As if you had been beside yourself, or had said one thing for another: in short, I never was seized with such strange stupidity. Though I know you are always disposed to devotion upon the sabbath, I was so confused by Marseilles and the opera, and the throng that surrounded you, that I never once thought of your regularity in that respect. Indeed, my dear child, I think we should ask your pardon for this injustice. I pity you for being compelled to hear bad sermons; this is a real grievance. I hear very good ones by Father Soanen, at St.-Gervais's, and the Abbé Anselme, at St.-Paul's, but not every day: this constraint is imposed upon you by the place you are in. I acknowledge that if I had to communicate for no other reason than external parade, I should not easily be prevailed upon to do it: I would rather avoid edifying fools and ignoramuses, than stake so much upon so important an occasion; for I am sure that the first Sunday in every month, and on the twelve or thirteen feasts of the Virgin, are sufficient. Good heavens! tell

them that St. Louis, who was more pious than you are, went to the communion only five times a year. But do the Provençals understand their religion? They are all pilgrims, penitents, makers of vows, women disguised in different colours. What does your foolish woman think of the King of England? will not Ireland allow her a little play? M. du Bois knows more than any man of our holy religion, disfigured as it is; he is as much displeased as I am with the fury of the hangman, who turned the execution of the sentence into a private quarrel between him and the malefactor; care should have been taken, not to let him die while he was uttering blasphemies; this was sending him to punishment too visibly and too scandalously: he should have been remanded back to prison, as M. du Bois says; opium should have been administered to appease him, and time allowed him to retract; this would have been acting conscientiously; but it is too late.

You talk of Pauline, as if she had a vocation; you think it such a one as your own, according to the estimation of the late M. d'Agen. It may be so, but do not forget to tell me what she says to you respecting it; and in what place she fancies she should like to be: the Coadjutor will be a very proper person to examine her. It is true, I feel an affection for her: is it because she has some sort of resemblance to you, even in her imperfections? It must be my star that leads me to it; for, besides that it very rarely happens that we have the same attachment for two persons, I am very much afraid that if Pauline is wayward, she has not, like you, the friendly and affectionate disposition which blinds us to everything but what is good and exquisite. Some day, my dear child, I shall, if it please God, judge for myself; in the meanwhile tell me how she goes on; I thought she was gentleness itself, with a disposition to please, that makes us please invariably.

The news respecting M. de Beauvilliers, M. de Chevreuse, and M. de Lauzun, is the coinage of the year; it was circulated here for two days, and probability induced

people to credit the report. I sent it to Madame de Coulanges and the Duchesse du Lude: the Abbé Bigorre sent it to me: but M. de Lamoignon would not receive it; and it was without foundation. It does not surprise us that it was propagated, and believed, in Provence. You have received *Esther*; its publication has produced the usual effect; you know M. de La Feuillade says it is a civil petition against the approbation of the public: you will judge. For my part, I answer only for the beauty of the representation, which cannot be called in question.

The Duchesse de Duras [1] went, the day after her marriage, which was yesterday, to take her tabouret. Her husband is going to join his regiment; the father, crowned with laurels, is at the head of the finest army France ever boasted; the mother is at Besançon, with a dagger in her heart; and the young Duchesse, with her mother, at the old Bouillon Mansion. Madame de Noailles wanted to go into Roussillon with her husband and the Comtesse de Guiche [2]; they are both pregnant, and are restricted till after their confinement. The Duchesse de Gramont is going to Béarn. I have informed you what a fine employment M. d'Avaux has obtained; nothing can be more brilliant. I am wholly yours, my dear child; I acquit myself perfectly, with regard to you, of the precept of loving my neighbour as myself.

LETTER 864

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, March 11, 1689.

The Duc de Chaulnes has paid the honours of his government to the King of England admirably: he had ordered two suppers to be prepared on the road, one at ten o'clock, the other at midnight: the King pushed on as

[1] Louise-Madeleine de La Marck.

[2] Daughter of Marie-Françoise de Bournonville, Duchesse de Noailles.

fast as possible to the last, at La Roche-Bernard: he very kindly embraced M. de Chaulnes, having known him formerly. M. de Chaulnes wished to conduct him to a chamber to repose himself: the King said he only wanted something to eat; and was led to a room where the fairies had served up a hot supper, consisting of the finest fresh and salt water fish, and every other comfort. The company was composed of a great number of the nobility of both sexes. M. de Chaulnes presented him the napkin, and would have waited upon him at table, but the King would not permit it, and made him sup with him, as well as several persons of quality. He ate as if there were no Prince of Orange in the world. He set out the next day, and embarked at Brest on the sixth or seventh of this month. What a man this Prince of Orange is, who alone sets all Europe in commotion! what a meteor! M. de La Feuillade expatiated the other day upon the exalted genius of this Prince; M. de Chandenier said he would rather be the King of England; M. de La Feuillade bluntly replied, "Spoken like a man who had rather be M. de Chandenier [1] than M. de Noailles!" This occasioned a laugh.

I return you M. de Grignan's letter; I am terrified even at having it in my pocket; is it possible he can have gone through the dangers he mentions? What a pity he had not *the superb order*, as it went to Monaco! Give my compliments to him upon his hair-breadth escapes. How do I stand with the Coadjutor? We agreed very well at Paris: say what you please to him, my dear child, according to the terms upon which you are with him; for I will have no understanding with your enemies.

[1] François de Rochechouart, Marquis de Chandenier, had been first Captain of the King's body-guard; but falling into disgrace, he was dismissed, and the Duc de Noailles succeeded him in 1651.

LETTER 865

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, March 14, 1689.

It is now, my dear child, four o'clock: I dined at eleven, and shall sup in the evening. I have been soliciting the gentlemen of the Grand Council, where M. Gui [1] has been pleased to make us recapitulate all the invincible arguments in your suit. I was accompanied by Rochon [2], who shows, from two little memorials drawn up in his way, that there is no contradiction in the *arrêts*. He has thoroughly instructed my good M. Bailly [3], who is to return to-morrow for our sake, to the very tribunal where he formerly made the justice of my cause to triumph; he will not do less for you: it calls for vengeance. We divide: the Chevalier is on his side with Vaille; he repeats the fatigues of the war, which I am sure he has very well got over, and only laughs at this. It is indeed a subject only for laughter; for, if justice be heard, the petition will be treated as a foolish, daring, groundless, attempt; and if the petition be received, we will advance our *state-letters*, and you must come this winter to obtain the victory. But M. Gui chases two hares at a time; on the day he presented a petition to the Grand Council, he presented another to the fourth Court of Inquests; this has excited anger and indignation. All your great friends do their duty admirably, and the Chevalier exceeds all praise.

[1] Agent of Madame d'Aiguebonne, with whom M. de Grignan was at law.

[2] M. de Grignan's agent.

[3] M. Bailly, Advocate-General in the Grand Council, a bold magistrate, had been, like M. de Roquesante, the friend of Madame de Sévigné, one of the judges of Fouquet who contributed to save him. They were both exiled in 1664, in consequence of this affair: a circumstance, said Guy Patin, which was never before known to have happened.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes at the same time to the Comte* DE GRIGNAN.

My dear Comte, I am rejoiced at your return; you have been in the country of goats, for none but those pretty personages can climb such rocks; the very thought makes me ill. I pray heaven, that the *demons* who appear and disappear in a moment, may not often give you so much trouble. You would not find it difficult to defend yourself here against the fury of M. Gui, who has no other support than ignorance, worthy of Madame de B*** [1], with whom I had a conversation alone the other day, and who talks as much nonsense as ever. I ask the Coadjutor's pardon for speaking thus of his old friend; but she is so unworthy of that title, that I shall no longer check myself. This deceitful woman is not worth caring for, whichever way she turns she cannot injure you. I embrace you, my dear Comte.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues and concludes her letter to her Daughter.*

I return to you, my dear child; I am delighted to think you said *Amen* to all the trifles I related. You have followed my advice; I am always more gratified at your writing a few lines less to me, than with reading your long letters, a pleasure which is always spoiled by reflecting upon the injury they do you. I find Madame de Chaulnes will set out after Easter, and I shall go very commodiously with her. Be not uneasy upon my account, except for the additional space between us, and the interruption of our correspondence for a few days.

I informed you that the Queen of England was going to Poissy; it was her intention, but the King opposed it. I wanted to fly after my letter; for I am always sorry to write you untruths. The news of M. de Beauvilliers, M.

[1] Madame de Buri.

de Chevreuse, and M. de Lauzun, was impertinently propagated throughout Paris. M. de La Trousse set out this morning to take the command in Poitou and the country of Aunis, under the orders, however, of Maréchal de Lorges. I believe that the Chevalier will be in an *army of France*. This is the name given to those that are not upon the Rhine.

*LETTER 866

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, March 16, 1689.

It is a long time since I wrote to my dear cousin. I have not been prevented by forgetfulness, but by a certain chain of little occupations, which makes us continually defer, what, however, we intend some day to perform. M. and Madame de Grignan are at their post. M. de Grignan has taken a frightfully fatiguing journey to the mountains of Dauphiny, to disperse and punish some wretched Huguenots, who come out of their holes, and vanish again like ghosts, as soon as they find pursuit is made after them, and that they are to be extirpated. These sort of flying or invisible enemies give a great deal of trouble, of which there is, literally, no end; for they disappear in a moment, and, as soon as their pursuer's back is turned, they reissue from their dens. You can have nothing like this in Burgundy. I believe I am going into Brittany with Madame de Chaulnes, who is to join her husband there: he has been doing wonders for these six or seven months. As our Brittany is full of nobles, who do not like to leave their Province, he has raised, in a moment, as it were, the finest regiment of dragoons in the world. Du Cambout has the command of it. He has also raised an equally fine regiment of militia. The corps of the nobility for the *arrière-ban*, is surprisingly grand and magnificent. This, my dear cousin, is the account I have to

give you of my family, and my intentions. I shall spend five or six months in Brittany, where I have a great deal of business, and shall return again with the Duchesse after the breaking up of the Assembly of the States. I think I cannot do better than embrace an opportunity so convenient and so pleasant to me. Adieu, my dear cousin; preserve your Christian philosophy, it is a real treasure; and suffer me to embrace my dear niece, and you, with all my heart.

M. DE CORBINELLI *also writes to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter.*)

Whatever you write makes me wish you would undertake some historical work, which might inform posterity of all that passed in your days. Give an account, at least, of all that has taken place in France and in England since the arrival of the Prince of Orange in that island. Bring into it all the political arguments that have appeared in the manifestoes of the two parties, and examine the question, whether religion be the motive from which all these movements have arisen.

An Irishman wrote lately to an Englishman, his friend, who was at the Court of France, requesting he would tell him how the King had been received there. The Englishman answered him by a verse out of the one hundred and ninth Psalm: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou upon my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

I defy Messieurs de Meaux, d'Autun, Fléchier, and Bourdaloue, great panegyrists as they are, to pronounce a finer eulogium upon the King than this. Adieu, Sir; continue to me the honour of your esteem, as to a man who best understands its value.

LETTER 867

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, March 16, 1689.

We have this morning gained the noblest victory that could be wished for, in the present state of your affairs with M. d'Aiguebonne: it is in your name, my dear child, that we have fought and beaten your enemies. M. Gui had started two hares at once; one by a petition to the Grand Council, upon the contradiction of *arrêts*; the other by a civil petition against your last *arrêt*; to the fourth Court of Inquests. We were informed of the one to the Grand Council; otherwise, the judges would have written, *let the parties appear*, and war would have been declared. Writing and pleading then take place, and an affair is traced back to the Deluge; it is re-examined, incidents occur, and this single word, which seems only to imply information and instruction, does all the mischief possible, to persons no longer willing to plead, and who think their business at an end: you are indebted for this first advice to one of your friends. The counsel who was summing up the evidence, and is a man of sense, was interrupted; he was told that the affair was not as he represented it, and that there was no contradiction in it; he was told that he must be better informed: upon this the Chevalier, Rochon, and I, appeared; we proved, even by your adversaries' papers, that, like the Jews, they stood self-condemned. Rochon spoke divinely. Solicitations now took place at the Presidents and Counsellors; in three days twenty-two judges were consulted; noise, complaints, and outcries against so long a persecution, only brought to mind the last sentence which you obtained *unanimously* six months ago. Everyone still recollected this. Everyone was alive to the subject; such vile chicanery excited indignation. Our friends took the field with so much sincerity, ardour, and earnest desire to

extricate you from this oppression, that they seemed to consider it as their own business: they were for throwing out the petition, putting it into the hands of the Registrar, which is to be considered as a decisive judgment, and the civil petition falls of itself. After such decision, no counsel is called, all chicanery is at an end, and everyone agrees that it was one of the finest victories that could be obtained under your standard, and in your favour. Such was the pleasure we received this morning; we were all present when the judges entered the Court, having the greatest reason to expect that we should confound our enemies; in fact, M. Bailly came out like the dove an hour afterwards, and said to me with a grave face, "Madame, you have obtained what you wished." I used no disguise with the Chevalier, Vaille, or Rochon; our hearts were cheered, and my joy would break forth. The Chevalier scolded me: he said he would not take me out again with him, if I could not be silent; this was his threat. I would speak loud, I would triumph; he threatened me again, and told me, that those who could not dissemble were not fit to reign. Another Counsellor came out, who told M. d'Aiguebonne that he had lost his cause; I saw him quietly withdraw, without saying a word; he is accustomed to this sort of success. I recollect having formerly seen Madame d'Ourouer [1], mother of M. de Richelieu, fly before me in the same tribunal, where I once previously summoned M. Bailly to bring me good fortune. M. Gui remained to console himself with his snuff-box. Another Counsellor told us, we had gained our cause unanimously; *unanimously* was a circumstance that gave us great pleasure. M. Gui had prudently said to M. Rousseau, that the decree you had obtained six months ago, had not been digested, that it had been given by children. Rousseau answered him very humorously this morning; "Twenty-two children, Sir, have just condemned you again unani-

[1] Marie-Françoise de Guemadeuc, widow of François de Vignerot, Marquis du Pont-Courlai, afterwards married to Charles de Grossove, Comte d'Ourouer, who was assassinated in his carriage in 1658.

mously." I could not help laughing at this; but the Chevalier's great soul would not attend to such trifles. We thanked all our judges when they came out, varying our compliments in twenty different ways. In short, we returned very gaily to dinner; the truth must be owned, the whole republic were convened to receive us: we each write to you our different parts; the Chevalier has allotted to me the recital of the victory, and at five o'clock we shall go together to thank our Presidents, the Dean, and some others, who signalised themselves. If you wish me, my dear child, to talk to you seriously of the Chevalier de Grignan, I must tell you, in good truth, that you owe him infinite obligations; nothing could equal his assiduity, his vigilance, his foresight; the strength and power of his solicitations; the warmth with which he inspired his friends to engage in our interest; the high estimation in which he is held; the trouble he has taken, for which God rewards him with a good state of health. In short, we find ourselves so well, and so happy in rendering you a service, that we intend to write a book entitled, *The Light and Salutary Anxieties of Friendship*; we shall print it, without being afraid of ruining the bookseller by the smallness of the sale; so true it is, that few persons are persuaded of this truth. You cannot be too thankful to the Chevalier, or love him too much. I know not how to talk to you of anything else at present, this being the gospel of the day.

The grief, which occasioned the Chevalier and me last night to weep affectionately at the situation of the Archbishop (*of Arles*), was in some degree alleviated this morning by the letters we received from Arles, which brought no confirmation of it; indeed they are silent upon the subject; we therefore hope that his faintness may not as yet be followed by the consequences we apprehended, and that so painful a loss as that of this great and illustrious prelate, may be retarded, at least, for some months. You say very right, my dear child, this was the *only* proper time to ask what they would have asked at an improper

time: but there are some people who never acknowledge themselves in the wrong; God help them!

Madame de Vins has given us good advice, and paid her compliments to us this morning, almost on the field of battle. Madame de Lavardin, Madame de La Fayette, and Madame de Coulanges, have sent to desire me to give you theirs. Adieu, dear child; I am too happy in having been able to take some steps for you; this is a joy which finds its way straight to my heart. You, Comte, are not without your share of it; I cordially embrace you both.

What says M. Gaillard [1] to this victory? ah! I see his eyes and his countenance. His brother does wonders at St.-Germain de l'Auxerrois [2].

LETTER 868

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, March 18, 1689.

You are right, my dear child, in thinking, I should be grieved at the death of the Archbishop [3]. You cannot imagine how much the true merit, rare virtues, good sense, and upright heart of this great prelate make me regret his loss. I cannot think of his goodness to his family, his affection for all in general, and for you and your son in particular, without feeling that there is a great vacancy in your house, which will never, I am not afraid to say it, never be filled. There are no minds, no hearts cast in the same mould; they are of a sort of metal that has been transmuted by the corruption of the times, till no more is

[1] Madame de Sévigné entertained a very high opinion of M. Gaillard's merit and sense. He was an advocate of the Parliament of Aix. She said, when she spoke of him, that no countenance had ever left so pleasing an impression on her imagination as his.

[2] Father Gaillard, a Jesuit, preached there during Lent with great success.

[3] François-Adhémar de Monteil, Archbishop of Arles, and uncle of M. de Grignan, died March 9, 1689.

left of the original ore. You have entered into my sentiments, and done me an honour, which I return, in finding what are your own sentiments. We must have a little of the good ore which we regret, to feel this loss as we feel it: this praise must be allowed; for I am persuaded, that we are more or less affected with great qualities, in proportion as we have more or less relation to them.

Receive here, my dear Comte, my sincere condolence; you were tenderly beloved by this dear uncle: he loved his name, and his family; he was right; they deserved his love. I pity you for being no longer able to honour so much merit, and so many respectable qualities: the first race is gone by, and we, my dear Comte, must follow. In the meantime, I embrace you in tears, as if I had the honour of bearing your name.

This melancholy event damps the joy of our little victory. The Chevalier is very desirous to push the civil petition, whilst the matter is in hand; but I know not whether he will have time; it should not be left half done: he cannot, however, do amiss. There is nothing more said of an *arrêt* of Council, of the annulling of the *arrêt*, or any opposition; so that we may sleep quietly till winter. I am delighted to think that our letters, which you receive at night, do not disturb your rest three times a week: I believe you, my dear child, and I will drive away this little *dragon* that has tormented me. Madame de Chaulnes is charmed at taking me with her; I have a thousand things to do at Buron, or rather at Nantes: I must also go there. I cannot employ my time better; afterwards, we shall see what it will please God to do with me, and when he will restore me to you. I believe we shall set out exactly at Easter. Father Gaillard preached excellently this morning on the subject of the Samaritan woman: he is the Bourdaloue of this year.

LETTER 869

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, March 21, 1689.

I assure you, my dear child, that the Bishop of Beauvais [1], who was here the other day, appeared to the Chevalier and me a worthy relation and true friend of the Grignans. He regretted and praised the late Archbishop so much, that the Chevalier could not help telling him at last, that, as the Coadjutor had not the Archbishop's *ribbon*, he was delighted to find that it was given to him; for Father de La Chaise had just informed the Bishop from the King, that His Majesty had conferred it on him, and that he should wear it at Whitsuntide. This *ribbon*, you see, was well destined.

I am very well pleased, my dear child, not to go alone upon the Loire, *with the course of the stream in a little boat*; particularly like that favourite servant of the King of England, who was taking to Nantes all the toilets, services of plate, night-gowns, and a thousand other conveniences, which our King had given to the King of England, and who was upset just near the bridge of Cé, the poor man being found drowned: this would have terrified you. I shall go in safety, perhaps before Easter, Madame de Chaulnes having taken it into her head to pass the holidays at Malicorne. I shall endeavour to stay till Easter week; but I am not certain that it will be so. She intends to write to you to-day, to tell you what care she will take of me. Congratulate M. de Chaulnes on his being treated as no other Governor is treated. Revel, Lieutenant-General, is under his command; and even the troops that are in the neighbourhood of Brest receive their orders from this Governor to obey Maréchal d'Estrées, when he has

[1] Toussaint de Forbin-Janson, Bishop of Beauvais, afterwards Cardinal and Grand Almoner of France.

occasion for them. M. de Louvois has been delighted with his good conduct, vigilance, and exactness; he says everything he can in his favour: M. de Chaulnes will be pleased at your knowing this, and writing to him upon the subject.

M. de Barillon is rich, fat, and, as he says, *old*, and views without envy M. d'Avaux's brilliant station. He loves peace and tranquillity, in the midst of his family and friends, with whom he is fully satisfied. You speak admirably of *Esther*; the misfortunes of Sion should be sung by innocent persons; Champmêlé would have given you the heartache. This propriety was one of the charms of the piece. Racine will find it a difficult task to write such another, for no history affords so excellent a subject as this; it has a combination and an assortment of circumstances which are not, perhaps, to be met with again; for Judith, Boaz, Ruth, and others whom I do not recollect, can never produce so fine an effect. Racine has, however, great talents, and we must hope he will succeed as well.

The Marquis de Castries has greatly distinguished himself on an occasion [1] similar to that in which the Chevalier de Sourdis was beaten. Madame de Castries [2] has received compliments on the occasion, the King having said to Cardinal de Bonzi, "If it had not been for the courage of your nephew, the infantry would have been lost; he performed wonders." You may guess how gratifying these praises are. Adieu, my beauty. I told M. de Pomponne that you were jealous of the immortal life of M. d'Angers [3]; he gave me an account of the liveliness of this prelate, who, excepting his sight, enjoys a very good state of health at ninety-two years of age and upwards. An Abbé de La Mothe, an Archdeacon, the one who condemned the orations of M. Le Tourneux, and said the church always viewed translations with horror, died after two days' illness, when he boasted he was in perfect health.

[1] At the retreat of Nuys.

[2] Elisabeth de Bonzi, mother of Joseph-François de La Croix, Marquise de Castries, and sister of Cardinal de Bonzi, Archbishop of Narbonne.

[3] Henri Arnauld, uncle of M. de Pomponne.

Your son applies himself to his duty and his profession; he is just what you could wish him to be, and is besides well grounded in religion, for which you should thank God. It is a great happiness to be blessed with Christian sentiments.

LETTER 870

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, March 23, 1689.

I shall not retract the praises I have bestowed on the tragedy of *Esther*; I shall be delighted with the harmony and novelty of this spectacle as long as I live; I was in raptures with it; I found in it a thousand things so just, so well introduced, and so important to a King, that I entered with uncommon spirit into the pleasure arising from the utterance, in fiction and song, of the most solid truths: I was affected with these various beauties; and am very far from changing my opinion: but I told you that the impression of this piece has produced its usual effect, and has brought forth a *civil demur* against excessive applause. I, who have read it again with pleasure, suppose that the critics are routed, as M. d'Aiguebonne will be with his *demur*, if the Chevalier has time to press the point. The victory of the Grand Council has been brilliant and gratifying, and I doubt not that it will give you ample satisfaction; I am impatient to receive your letter upon this subject. M. de Lamoignon told me again to-day, that this advantage, gained sword in hand, was greater than we supposed. I told him he was mistaken, as we had felt the pleasure in its fullest extent. He is very much engaged in the great cause between MADEMOISELLE, the Prince, and the whole house of Lorraine, who have recourse to law in the same way we have; M. de Lamoignon is to plead on Thursday, and the affair will be determined upon hearing.

Your son's letter will give you pleasure, as it appears to come from a man who is happy, and who has his profession at heart. The King is so well pleased with M. de Castries, that he has made him Brigadier; this is the right method of proceeding; rewards given at the moment they are deserved receive an additional value, they excite and encourage emulation. His Majesty told Cardinal de Bonzi [1], that, as he had no share in this favour, he ought not to thank him for it.

The King of England set sail on the seventeenth, and arrived in Ireland on the nineteenth. Little Mailly, who accompanied him to Brest, has returned. Adieu, my beloved child; I dread an increase of distance from you; it makes me ill. I swallow this journey like a dose of medicine; but the worst is, that I have no time to lose; in truth, my reflections are often of the most melancholy cast; for, though I submit to that Providence which separates us, what would become of me, if I had not the hope of seeing you again?

LETTER 871

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, March 25, 1689.
(The Day of the Annunciation.)

Though we have not received your letters, we do not fail to write to you. It is very probable that you have set a good example to-day; which is a high festival, and the foundation of that of Easter; in short, it is the festival of Christianity, the day of the incarnation of our Lord: the Virgin Mary acts a great part in it, but not the principal one. M. Nicole, M. Le Tourneux, and all our preachers, have told us all they know upon the subject.

Your son has written me a most affectionate letter: he deeply laments the loss of his good uncle the Archbishop. It is thought that his successor will soon be here:

[1] Uncle of the Marquis de Castries.

he may amuse himself [1], if he pleases, with the civil petition; we have carried the judgment of the Grand Council sword in hand. I still dispute with Madame de Chaulnes; and am for postponing our departure till after Easter. My dear child, how mortified I am at leaving you again! I feel keenly this separation; *reason says Brittany, and friendship says Paris.* We must sometimes submit to the stern ruler: you know how to do it better than anyone, I must therefore imitate you.

Attend a little to what follows: Are you acquainted with M. de Béthune, the mad shepherd of Fontainebleau, commonly called *Cassepot* [2]? Do you remember his person? tall, thin, silly-looking, sallow, and ghostly. He lodged at the Lionne Château with the Duc and Duchesse d'Estrées, Madame de Vaubrun, and Mademoiselle de Vaubrun. The last of these personages went about two months ago to St.-Marie's, in the Faubourg St.-Germain. It was supposed that the happiness of her sister had induced her to become a nun. Can you guess what kept this *Cassepot* at the Lionne Château? Love, my child; love for Mademoiselle de Vaubrun. Though he is precisely what I have described him to you, she was attached to him. Benserade would say of her, as he did of Madame de Ventadour, who loved her husband, "So much the better: if she loves him, she will love anyone." This girl of seventeen was really smitten with this Don Quixote; and he went yesterday with five or six of M. de Gesvres' guards, broke open the *grille* of the convent, entered with one of his men, found Mademoiselle de Vaubrun, who was waiting for him, put her into a coach, took her to the house of M. de Gesvres, made a sort of marriage vow, by kissing his sword, slept with her, and this morning, at break of day, they were off, nobody knows where.

We may truly say, on this occasion, "Agnes and the

[1] Jean-Baptiste Adhémar de Monteil, Coadjutor of Arles, brother of M. de Grignan.

[2] Judging by what is said of M. de Charost in the next following letter (in this volume), and in Letter 877, of 11th April, 1689 (also in this volume), we may conclude that this *Cassepot* was a Béthune.

dead body are gone away together." [1] The Duc d'Estrées exclaims that Béthune has violated the laws of hospitality. Madame de Vaubrun is for having his head cut off. M. de Gesvres says he did not know it was Mademoiselle de Vaubrun. All the Béthunes seem desirous to prevent their kinsman from being prosecuted. I know not yet what has been said upon the subject at Versailles. This, my dear child, is the gospel of the day. What think you of love? I despise it when it amuses itself with such disgusting personages.

LETTER 872

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, March 28, 1689.

We do not set out till after Easter, which delights me: Madame de Chaulnes has taken leave; the King said a thousand kind things of her husband. We expect your letters of to-morrow with real impatience; we long to know how you received the news of our *little* victory, which M. de Lamoignon calls a great one. For a fortnight past we have been on the water, and have seen you agitated by the same thoughts and fears that we have had. We shall be delighted to see you also safely landed, and equally secure from the storm. You are right to say I was not so much pleased when I gained my cause on which forty thousand crowns depended; I did not feel it in comparison to this: I was young, I know not what I thought of at that time: I was a stranger to all my affairs: you are much nearer, and your interest is infinitely dearer to me.

M. de Lamoignon has been entangled on all sides in the affair of *Cassepot* and Vaubrun. He is related to the latter, and to M. de Gesvres, who, after having assisted in this wicked business, ran to Versailles, and told the King that being the friend of M. de Béthune, he could not

[1] See Molière's *L'Ecole des Femmes*, Act V., Scene v.

avoid serving him: the King reprimanded him, and told him he did not give him the government of Paris for such a purpose: M. de Gesvres asked pardon, and the King was somewhat pacified. As to M. de Béthune, he may go where he pleases; but if he should be taken, and tried, no person could save him; all the Béthune family will endeavour to prevent his appearing. M. de Lamoignon has brought the girl back to her mother, whose heart was ready to burst at seeing her again: the girl says she is not married; she however passed two nights with this vile *Cassepot*. It is reported that she has been married these four months, and that she has so written to the King. Nothing can be more extravagant than the whole affair. The Duc d'Estrées is enraged that a man whom he generously allowed to live with him, should thus have broken in upon and violated the laws of hospitality. The Duc de Charost and he had some words on Lady-day; the Duc d'Estrées carried his reproaches and menaces to a great length, without mincing the matter; the Duc de Charost was piqued, and said to him, "Sir, if I had not taken the sacrament today I should say so, and so, and so, to you." The Duc was in a rage at this. If such was the style of de Charost on the day of communion, what would it have been on any other day?

We supped last night at the Abbé Pelletier's with M. and Madame de Lamoignon, M. and Madame de Coulanges, M. Courtin, the Abbé Bigorre, Madame Langlois, and your mamma. Not one of us had dined, so that we were quite voracious, and it was the finest repast for Lent that could be seen; the finest fish, the best ragoûts, and the most excellent cookery. We wished for you very sincerely; but the wine of St. Laurence so perfectly renewed your remembrance, that there was a battle of little glasses, which plainly proved that the liquor came from you. You have no good fish, my dear child, in your sea; I well remember that we could never get any soles, or *vives*. I cannot conceive how you manage your Lent; for my part, I scarcely feel the inconvenience. M. de Lamoignon, with

his nephritic complaint, has not once thought of eating meat.

This, to me, is an incomprehensible period; when time is disagreeable to me, as at present, and I wish and hope for a better, I push it forwards by the shoulder, as you do; and then, when I consider what it costs me in its flight, to what point it tends, and that it also pushes me forward, I stop short, and leave everything to God: I find no other stay or support against the melancholy future, which I have in view, but his will and Providence: without this consolation we should be miserable indeed. "If you knew the gift of God [1];" I remember that excellent sermon. I heard a fine discourse on the same day, by Father Soanen; the Samaritan woman was not dishonoured: how grievous to see her disfigured by unworthy preachers! it afflicts me. All the preachers of this year are attended to, when the great Pan [2] does not preach; this is the great Bourdaloue, who, last year, left Father de La Tour [3], and

[1] *Si scires donum Dei.* Joan. 4. 5.

[2] Plutarch relates that a man of the name of Thamus, sailing among the islands of the Ægean sea, heard a voice issue from one of them, commanding him to proclaim everywhere that the great Pan was dead. As this adventure took its date from the reign of Tiberius, the Fathers of the church considered it as a miraculous prediction of the death of Jesus Christ, typified by the great Pan. This word too, in Greek, means *all,* and hence the god Pan has been regarded as the emblem of nature, or even of the universal God, an explanation for which singular motives have been found in the attributes under which he was represented.

Many great personages have been designated either satirically, or in praise, by the name of the great Pan. When Cardinal de Richelieu died, there appeared a poem of a hundred lines from Nostradamus, beginning with this verse:

Quand le grand Pan quittera l'ecarlate, . . . *

It was by Guy Patin. Some pedant, we know not who, announced the death of Saumaise under this emphatic name.

We now see why Madame de Sévigné calls Bourdaloue, the eminent preacher, who in his sermons included all morality, philosophical and Christian, the great Pan.

[3] Afterwards General of the Oratory.

* When the great Pan shall quit the scarlet, . . .
[Translation.]

even Father de La Roche [1], and the Abbé Anselme, who shines at St.-Paul's, and Father Gaillard, who works miracles at St.-Germain de l'Auxerrois, to preach to empty pews. Adieu, my best and dearest child; do not trouble yourself to answer all this chat: consider that I have but one letter to write; if I were obliged to write another after this, I should actually run away to escape it.

LETTER 873

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, March 30, 1689.

Ah! thank God, my dear child, you are, at length, arrived; you are upon the same shore with us. You are no longer agitated by uncertainty; you now know as much as we do; but I tell you seriously, that you over-rate the trifling pains I have taken for you, and the little services I have rendered you. You talk of obligation and gratitude, as if you had forgotten the claims of affection, and were ignorant of the pleasure of aiding those we love; ours have been overpaid by their success; rather let us thank you for giving us this opportunity of displaying our zeal. To all this you add thanks, kind expressions and compliments, which overwhelm us with confusion: I know not whether the Chevalier is as much ashamed as I am. I was not aware that my account was so animated, it certainly fell far short of M. Gaillard's eyes; I figure to myself his *admiring* and expressive countenance, which proves that his admiration is not the daughter of ignorance, like that of the rest. In short, my dear child, you were pleased with the picture I drew of our victory. The Chevalier has just told me, that on Madame de Buri's [2] return from Paris, the Princesse de Conti asked her what she had done there. "I have been at law there, Madame." "With

[1] A celebrated preacher of the Oratory.

[2] Sister of M. de Aiguebonne.

whom?" "Messieurs de Grignan." "What! do you still continue this knavish business? Fie! fie! how can people begin again when they have once lost a cause, as you had done?"—I ask pardon, my child, of the Chevalier's noble soul: I must own that this conversation gave great pleasure to my soul of clay. This is how Buri stands at Versailles; you know how she is in the Grand Council and the Court of Inquests; so that you may conclude she deserves the same inscription (*annulled*) upon her back, as upon her petition. She was coming from a judge as I entered; on seeing me, she said to him, "Sir, I leave you in good hands:" the air with which she uttered these words gave me some emotion, but I had the prudence to say nothing; I had also several little things to tell her, but was silent. If you follow the advice of your friend, you will arrange your affairs, so as to come this winter and complete what remains; for with the sentence you have obtained, there is nothing to be feared; what is done, is done, and you will settle the judgment of the civil petition with M. de Grignan's Knighthood, pay your respects at Court, and see your son: these considerations united will induce you to take a good resolution. Your comparison of M. Gui, who has the folly to seek to be condemned in all the Courts, with the fool who was always endeavouring to restore to life a dead body, without being able to compass his design, has greatly humbled me: I find the good use you make of this story, which perished one day entirely in my hands, in the presence of the Chevalier: this was a great misfortune, for I think the story excellent. You have restored it to life, my dear child, and have applied it admirably.

We hear that the King of England has arrived in Ireland, where he was received with transport. The Prince of Orange is so much afflicted with an asthma, that all the troops he raises desert, thinking he is going to die: seven regiments have left him to go into Scotland. For my part, I am persuaded that the King of England, with God's assistance, will overcome all his enemies, and dispel all the clouds that seem ready to burst upon us. The Swiss are

all softened: M. Amelot is doing wonders there: this is great news. M. de Beauvilliers, M. de Lamoignon, and Easter, will reconcile all the spirits that are so enraged at the carrying off Mademoiselle de Vaubrun, an affair which I have related to you; the public will be a gainer by the absence of that villain *Cassepot.*

LETTER 874

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, April 1, 1689.

We still think of setting out as soon as the holidays are over: I cannot get the better of my melancholy at the thought of being so distant from you: I know not how this journey will terminate. I do not think I shall see my son, who is in despair at the tremendous expense he will incur to head his militia in Lower Brittany. He admires the work that is cut out for him by the Prince of Orange, the d'*Aiguebonne* of Europe, as you very properly call him; and by what arrangements or derangements Providence is pleased to seek him out in his woods, to bring him again into the world and into the war by that quarter.

Your letters of the twenty-seventh have arrived. You are indisposed, my dear child; you say that sometimes your stomach talks to you: you see that your head also talks to you: it is impossible to tell you more plainly that you break it to shatters; that though it gives you great pain when you exercise it too violently by reading or writing, it leaves you free, when you leave it free, and desist from such violent exercises, for such they are: that poor head, so good, so well turned, so capable of the greatest things, asks you for quarter: this is not explaining itself ambiguously; take pity on it, then, my dear girl; consider it as impracticable to keep up our double correspondence, to answer all the casual letters that daily arrive, and to write besides to Madame de Vins three times a week: this is not

living, it is dying for us: very obliging truly! When I see you writing upon large paper, I fancy I see you mounted upon one of your high horses; you ride well, I acknowledge; but you go too far, and I can no longer endure the consequences. Take pity, then, on yourself, and on us: for my part, if I were obliged, after having written to you, to write another letter of the same length, I should, as I have before told you, run away to escape it. If you think I dwell too much upon this subject, it is that I have it much at heart.

I hope the Chevalier will, through M. de Cavoie, prevent my paying compound interest, by paying seventeen thousand nine hundred livres, which I have now in my pocket, by the assistance of my daughter-in-law [1]: if this be the case, pray thank him for me; the way is somewhat long for so lively an acknowledgment as mine, but it is the more worthy of the benefit. I shall be delighted to find M. de Grignan has himself answered your sister-in-law; she writes me a great many sweet things and a great many sour things for him; this, she says, is a disposition she ineffectually combats: in short, it is necessary to jest with her a little, for this is the turn of her mind.

Your son is not now at all exposed to danger; enjoy this calm, my dear child. There has been some skirmishing in other places: Chamilly has been somewhat beaten, and Gandelus considerably wounded; but Toiras has had a brilliant little clash, in which he has defeated or taken three or four hundred men. The affairs of England go on well; the credit of the Prince of Orange diminishes daily. A wag has written upon the door of the palace at Whitehall, "This house to be let at Midsummer." Scotland and Ireland are entirely against this Prince. The King of England has been very well received in Ireland; he has promised the Protestants every degree of liberty and protection, provided they are faithful to him. The Lord-Lieutenant is Lady Hamilton's husband. We must see what turn these affairs take; it appears to me as if this

[1] Jeanne-Marguerite de Brehan de Mauron, Marquise de Sévigné.

large black cloud, loaded with hail, began to disperse. We have seen such as these at Livry, that have gone off without a storm. God will direct everything. Adieu, my dear child; take care of yourself, make Pauline write, whilst you rest yourself in your boudoir.

LETTER 875

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, April 6, 1689.

I inform you on the part of Madame de La Fayette, and the numerous company of hypochondriacs, that vapours arising from the exhaustion of the spirits are the most dangerous and the most difficult to cure; after this if you exhaust yourself, if you take delight in having the headache to such a degree that you cannot bend your head without pain, if you will still force yourself to write and read, you will soon find yourself incapable of anything, and become a mere woman of glass. As this disorder arises solely from incessant writing; I conjure you to be less studious, if you love us; rest upon your bed when you wish to chat with us, and make Pauline write; this will teach her to think and to arrange her thoughts; you will preserve yourself, and we shall converse with you thus, without any expense to you. I wish you had been bled: what inconvenience can arise to you from it? This would have opened your veins, and given your blood more room to circulate; but you will not be persuaded. This dear periwinkle would do wonders for you; I am glad you found it at hand; one might say it was made on purpose for you. When you recovered your beauty, I was asked, "What grass did she walk upon?" I replied, "On periwinkle." I know not yet why you have been in such a hurry to go these holidays to Grignan, without your husband. Nothing could be better than being at St. Marie's, and avoiding the dust and buildings of Grignan as long as

possible. If I understand you, M. *d'Arles* is there: I use this name to avoid saying the Coadjutor, or the Archbishop: there is great ingenuity in the discovery. Let us say a word more about our victory in the Grand Council: it has given us a good opinion of our leaders; in truth, our success was glorious and gallant; everything was rapid; it was a crowned work we carried sword in hand. No one but you could have gained the civil petition, though it had been less difficult, because we should all be separated in a moment, and one person alone cannot undertake it; for my part, I should not engage without my Colonel [1].

It rains incessantly; I endeavour to put Madame de Chaulnes out of her way, that she may defer her journey for a week. I shall pay my money to-morrow to the Syndic of Brittany; he receives it on account of the principal and interest; I shall make my protestations, and say, "I have paid the sum that I owe upon the inventory; that I am out of debt, and that I neither can nor ought to pay the compound interest, as this would be usury." I wish this were tried by the States, but I fear it will come on here before the Commissaries. I will draw back as much as I can but enough of this, it has grieved me, and it is over.

No one knows what is become of the courier of M. d'Enrichemont. But M. de Brionne is to sign to-morrow his marriage-articles with Mademoiselle d'Espinai, a rich heiress of a great family [2]. The news from England seems favourable to us; neither the Irish, the Scotch, nor even the English, are attached to the Prince of Orange. It is certain that your son is too amiable; this is a blessing and a misfortune; but *God preserve him,* in the tone that flows from your heart, and penetrates mine, for it is the characteristic of truth. Adieu, my dear child; I am not troubled with the vapours, yet I will write no longer: it is late, it rains, and I must send away my letters. I only ask you one question, which pray answer me sincerely:

[1] The Chevalier de Grignan.

[2] This marriage did not take place till the twenty-third of December following.

Are you not chagrined, though you laugh at your jealousy? On what terms are you with Madame D.? It does not seem to me that you have availed yourself of either her wit or conversation.

LETTER 876

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Good Friday, April 8, 1689.

I did not expect your letters to-day, my dear child; I must retire to-night, as I begin my Easter devotions to-morrow; it is you that I want to estrange a little from my mind. I heard a very fine sermon this morning preached by the Abbé Anselme at St.-Paul's; I had been quite prejudiced against him; I thought him a Gascon; and this was sufficient to destroy all faith in what he said: but he obliged me to lay aside this unjust opinion, and I think him one of the best preachers I ever heard. He has understanding, devotion, grace, and eloquence; in short, there are very few I prefer to him. I wish you were treated like Christians in the Provinces, and that they would send you such a man as this. How is it possible to attend to your preachers? they are an injury to religion.

Madame de Chaulnes wants to go before Low Sunday. I have just made some little arrangements, which will be admirable, in case of an alarm, to re-establish your peace of mind. Do not mention this again to me, when you write; the Chevalier approves it, and that is sufficient. Here ends my letter; I shall add four lines in the evening. I am going to *Tenebres,* and from thence to St.-Paul's.

I am returned, my dear child, and I take my leave of you, desiring you will rest, and make Pauline write, if you are inclined to answer my chat; otherwise do not attend to it, write me short letters, and keep yourself well; this is all I request.

LETTER 877

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, April 11, 1689.

You have at length, my dear child, quitted Aix; at least you appear to me to have done so. You are now at Grignan; do you find yourself better in this solitude, with all the inconveniences that have arisen there? I cannot help thinking that your fondness for retirement is, in fact, nothing more than the desire of being faithful to the taste you have acquired for sadness and melancholy: you are afraid, lest dissipation should, in some measure, abate the apprehensions you wish constantly to cherish for your dear child, whenever he is in the least danger. I guess, perhaps, but too justly; but you must be very cruel to yourself, not to take advantage, at least of the time, when the little man is happy, to be so yourself, instead of anticipating evil as you do. I believe we shall set out the day after to-morrow, in the morning: I am ridiculously melancholy at a journey I wish to take, which I ought to take, and which I do take with every possible comfort of travelling. Madame de Kerman [1] is again to go with us; she is an amiable woman: we shall have a great retinue, two coaches and six, a caravan, eight horsemen; in short, we shall travel in style: we shall sleep at Malicorne: could you wish for a better opportunity? You will at first direct your letters to me at Rennes; and I will inform you when to address them to Vitré. I shall soon be surfeited with the noise and bustle at Rennes; I only go there to see M. de Chaulnes. The Chevalier is going immediately to Versailles. I thought *he would not have left me till he had seen me hanged* [2], but he has business; I am grieved at the thoughts of his absence; it is a real consolation to

[1] Marie-Anne du Pui de Murinais, Marquise de Kerman.

[2] See Scene IX, *Act III.* of Molière's *Médecin malgré lui.*

me to converse with him, respecting you and your affairs, which are our bond of union. We meet to talk upon what we have solely at heart; the Chevalier is strong, I am weak; he can easily do without me, but I cannot do without him; meditation will be my employment, and here I shall find you; but I shall want the prop which was so necessary and so agreeable to me; we are obliged to tear ourselves from, and dispense with, all that is desirable. Tell me your intentions with regard to the civil petition: shall you inform M. d'Arles of it? will you not yourself return to gain it? for, with respect to us, everyone may go his own way; we are satisfied with having gained our little victory. Let me hear of you, my dear child, and of all that relates to you; consider that I shall learn nothing more from the Chevalier; you may depute Pauline to chat with me, as you know there is nothing I dread so much as overwhelming you with writing.

The misunderstanding between the Duc d'Estrées and M. de Gesvres is accommodated; his nose is reconciled to the noses of the Béthunes. Mademoiselle de Vaubrun has so often repeated that she was not married, and that she would be a nun, that she has been placed amongst the *filles bleues* of St.-Denys. The world has gained this advantage, that *Cassepot* is no longer in France. I have no news for you. Mademoiselle de Méri has been very ill of a bilious sickness; she has taken a little emetic tartar, and is now recovered. Adieu, my dear child; preserve for me the dear affection which constitutes the happiness of my life: I will not tell you all my tenderness, nor all my weakness.

LETTER 878

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Tuesday, at night, April 12, 1689.

If your letters, which I expect, come to hand to-night, I will answer them upon the road, or at latest, at Malicorne. We shall set out to-morrow morning, and sleep at Bonnelle; the rest will go at eight or nine o'clock; Madame de Chaulnes, who is vigilance itself, will set off at day-break. You know, that in going to Bourbon, I must rather accommodate myself to her manners, than endeavour to correct them; so I shall pursue my journey, and, from the easiness of my disposition, nothing will displease me. All the security and precautions that can be desired in a journey, I shall find in this; and I shall not even have occasion to be frightened, to cry out, and blush; our good Duchesse takes upon herself all these things, and I shall go through it with all the external marks of courage and resolution, compared to her seeming fear and timidity: thus I shall obtain undeserved eulogiums. I have given all necessary orders for the receipt of your letters at Malicorne, Vitré, and afterwards at Rennes. I will write to you again as soon as possible; but be under no concern if you should not receive my letters regularly, as this will be the fault of the weather and the post. I am still grieved at my departure; how can I reflect upon the situation of your affairs without real sorrow? the death of the Archbishop (*of Arles*) still overwhelms you. I fear, I know not why, that your eagerness to get to Grignan has been too great a fatigue to you. The Chevalier was a little uneasy that you set out from Aix, without discharging your debts entirely: there are some things that should not be omitted; they escape our memory, as soon as we are absent. God grant we may meet again some time or other. God preserve you; take care of your

health; mine is of great consequence to me, on account of the interest you take in it. I have been paying some farewell visits this morning for your sake; this is the salt which makes everything relish. Adieu, my beloved Comtesse: I weep; what folly! It is owing to this renewed absence and lengthened distance. See M. de La Garde, keep up your spirits, and do not give way to melancholy: avail yourself of your courage, and fulfill the decrees of Providence.

*LETTER 879

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, April 13, 1689.

You have answered well for the *arrière-ban* of Autun, my dear cousin; but as I cannot say the same things as you, you would very much oblige me by writing an answer for me to the Lieutenant-General d'Auxois, who requires me to send a man. I tell him I gave the principal of my estate at Bourbilly to my daughter on her marriage: he torments me for the usufruct. I ask your pardon, my dear cousin, but I shall throw myself, without hesitation, into the commons of Paris. I shall show the leases of my houses; shall produce my receipts for mud and other trifles; shall even prove that I have distributed the bread-offering: in short, I shall make my escape through the bogs as I can, rather than pay five or six hundred francs for a substitute for the *arrière-ban.* I have seen my old friend M. Jeannin here, and Madame de Montjeu, whom I like extremely. Madame de Toulongeon has also her value. Amuse yourself with these charming women, my dear cousin, and be careful of a state of health which animates and gives hope to ours. I embrace my dear niece, and recommend you to each other.

*LETTER 880

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, May 13, 1689.[1]

You will do well, my dear cousin, to exempt yourself from the payment of six or seven hundred livres for a substitute in the *arrière-ban,* if you are able. You formerly gave enough to your son for the King's service. Endeavour to pass for a citizen of Paris; I consent to this, and to everything that can save your cash, except losing you as my dear cousin; for I would rather pay the sum for you, than that this should happen.

The lot of war will fall upon Flanders, because the Emperor will be engaged with the Turk and with Tékély. The inhabitants of Liège[2] have been guilty of an instance of treachery to the King, of which we have no example in our century; depend on it that he will exhibit to future ages an example of their punishment. He has not slackened in his assistance to the King of England. Nothing can be more noble or more honourable than the zeal he displays for him. Adieu, my dear cousin; I send you a little poem of M. Pavillon's, which will please you.

[1] We insert this letter out of its proper chronological order, it being an answer to the preceding one; it would be less easily understood if it were placed further on in its proper order.

[2] They had seized a supply destined for the French army, and received the enemy into their citadel. Liège was, in 1691, bombarded by Maréchal de Boufflers.

LETTER 881

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, late at night, April 13, 1689.

Our journey is not only postponed for to-day, but we shall not set out for Brittany these twelve days, on account of M. de Chaulnes's journey to Nantes. Madame de Chaulnes called on me this morning, to ask me if I would spend ten days with her at Chaulnes; or whether we should meet at Rouen on a day appointed, and go to Brittany by way of Caen: I did not hesitate; I am so much on wing, and so absent from Paris, that I am going to rest myself at Chaulnes; Madame de Kerman is of the same opinion. It is so decided, and to-morrow we set out for Chaulnes; but you, my dear love, are at Grignan; I enter into all your anxiety, and feel it with you. You were afraid there would be no war, and were thinking to what part of Europe you should be obliged to send your son. Providence has laughed at your devices; all Europe is in a blaze; you have not thought of the Prince of Orange, who is the *Attila* of this period. Some important news is circulated to-day, which will give a turn to affairs; the King of Poland having declared war against the Emperor on twenty subjects of complaint, and the Turk not having made peace, there will not be much to fear on the borders of the Rhine. In short, my child, everything is from above; everything is in the hands of God. This little boy, already habituated to the profession, so capable, so well informed, and who has seen three sieges before the age of seventeen: this is what you little thought of, but which God saw from all eternity. Tell me how Pauline employs herself. Adieu, my beloved child; reflect that you are a woman of fortitude; that if there was no war, you would be in search of it; that God preserves your son; that he is in his hands, and that you may hope to see

him again in good health: think of the many perils from which he has snatched the Chevalier, and that your child will follow the steps of his uncle.

LETTER 882

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Chaulnes, Sunday, April 17, 1689.

I expect your letter on Friday; how sad it is that I can no longer hear from you regularly three times a week! this is what I have at heart, and which I called my *light affliction*; but indeed it is not light, and I shall painfully feel this privation. The Chevalier wrote me a short adieu from Versailles, but so full of kindness, that it greatly affected me; he cruelly withholds from his friends the knowledge of the share they have in his esteem; and, as they are anxious to obtain it, he deprives them of a real pleasure. I thanked him for his letter, by another which I wrote at my departure: he informed me that your son would not be in a certain detachment, as what had been talked of was no longer a subject of attention; this afforded my heart much relief; and as he has told you the same, you must breathe as freely as I do. I but too well understand all your sorrows; they reflect back to me, so that I feel them doubly.

I set out then, my beloved child, on Thursday, with Madame de Chaulnes and Madame de Kerman; we were in the best carriage, drawn by the best horses, with a great retinue, caravans, horsemen, and every possible convenience and precaution that could be taken. We slept that night at Pont, in a pretty little inn, and the next night here. The roads are bad; but this is a very handsome house, which carries with it an air of grandeur, though it is partly unfurnished, and the gardens neglected. There is scarcely any verdure to be seen, and not a nightingale to be heard; in short, it is still winter, on the seventeenth

of April. But it is easy to imagine the beauties of these walks; everything is regular and magnificent; a spacious parterre in front, bowling-greens opposite the wings, a large playing fountain in the parterre, two in the bowling-greens, and another at a distance in the middle of a field, which is well named *the solitary*; a fine country, beautiful apartments, and a pleasant prospect, though flat; elegant furniture, which I have not yet seen: in short, the house is worthy of all you have heard of it in prose and verse. The Duchesse is so good, so amiable, and so attentive to me, that if you love me, which I do not at all doubt, you must necessarily be very much obliged to her for all the civilities she shows me. We shall stay in this delightful house six or seven days longer: we shall then go through Normandy to Rennes, where we shall be on the second or third of next month. This, my dear child, is all I can tell you of myself, except that I enjoy the most perfect state of health in the world. How are you, my love? alas! at what a distance I am from you! how present are you to my remembrance! tell me, how can I avoid being melancholy?

I received your letter of Good Friday on the ninth of April: my child, you undertake too much; you abuse your youth; you find that your head will not suffer you to exhaust it by so much writing; if you do not attend to its monitions in time, the consequences may be fatal; you refuse to be bled; but why did not you undergo this operation at Aix, before you began to keep Lent? in short, I am dissatisfied with you and your health. Your reasons for lengthening your stay at Avignon are good; it would otherwise, as you say, be too early for Grignan: the dreadful winter and tremendous winds are still to be feared there. The Chevalier and I are now incapable of serving you in your civil petition; he expects to set out every moment; my departure has already taken place; this is not the work of a day; Hercules could not defeat Anteus [1], nor root him out from his wicked practices, in three

[1] The giant of Libya, son of Neptune and the Earth, smothered by Hercules.

months: this business, then, must be M. d'Arles's department. All this made me say, that if you could have come this winter with M. de Grignan, you would, according to the laws of the game, have put an end to this affair: your presence would have wrought miracles. You talk to me of the dispositions of the people of Provence; those of this country are not so difficult to understand; they may be discovered in a moment: but you, my dearest child, are too amiable, too grateful; all you say to me is gratitude: I am at home there; yours is the most affectionate, the tenderest, and the noblest in the world: preserve your feelings, your sentiments, and the rectitude of your mind; reflect upon all this sometimes, as we smell at Hungary water, when we are in a bad air; take nothing from the country where you are, but preserve all you have carried thither; and above all things, my dear child, pay attention to your health, if you love me, and wish me to return.

LETTER 883

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Chaulnes, Tuesday, April 19, 1689.

I expect your letters; the post comes in three times a week, and I have a strong desire to stay here. I begin then to write to you, to render you an account of my thoughts; for this is all I have now to tell you, which will not make my letters very entertaining; nor will you meet with anything new, since you have long known that I love you, and how I love you. You would do well, therefore, instead of reading my letters, to leave them unopened, and to say, "I know all that my mother tells me;" but, being persuaded that you will not have the power to act thus, I must tell you, that I am very uneasy about your health, and your headache. I am terrified at the air of Grignan; a wind that can "tear up by the roots trees whose towering heads reached the skies, and whose feet touched

the empire of the dead [1]," makes me tremble; I fear lest it should carry away my daughter, exhaust her strength, dry up her veins, deprive her of rest, make her grow thin, and destroy her beauty; I own to you, that all these apprehensions make me shudder, and deprive me of all comfort. I was walking alone, the other day, in these beautiful alleys, Madame de Chaulnes being engaged in business, and Madame de Kerman too delicate to walk; I therefore rehearsed for *The Rocks*; I entered into all my former melancholy thoughts, yet found some pleasure in being alone. I read over three or four of your letters; you talk of writing well; no one can excel you in this respect; how easily do you express yourself in a few words, and how do you arrange them! this perusal affected my heart, and gratified my mind. This is a very pleasant house to be in; we have no restraint here; you are acquainted with the good and substantial qualities of this Duchesse. I have discovered that Madame de Kerman is a very amiable woman; she has much more merit and wit than she displays; she is very superior to the generality of women; has a great share of information, which she increases every day by reading the best authors; it is a pity that she should be fixed at the extremity of Lower Brittany. When you can write to M. and Madame de Chaulnes, I will willingly resign my part to them: you can write to me by Pauline: I know your style, and that is sufficient. I wish M. de Grignan were with you; I do not like your being alone in that Castle, my poor little Orithyas [2]! for Boreas is neither gallant nor civil to you; this it is that afflicts me. Adieu, my love; respect your side, and your head: I know not whether you have any other ailments. I comprehend your anxiety for your son, I feel it, from my love for him, and from my love for you, which is greater still. Thus I receive two blows at once.

[1] See the Fable of "The Oak and the Rivulet," by La Fontaine, Fable 22.

[2] Orithyas, daughter of Erechteus, King of Athens, was carried away by Boreas, King of Thrace; which gave rise to the fable of the rape of Orithyas, by the wind called Boreas.

Corbinelli, who is the best man in the world, is still with us, and still immersed in his *christianised* philosophy; for he reads nothing but godly books.

LETTER 884

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Chaulnes, Friday, April 22, 1689.

It is a pity to be obliged to quit so beautiful and so charming a place, where your letters arrive three times a week; you know that without the one thing needful, we suffer everything, and how can I expect to find it when you are absent? We shall set out on Sunday, with delightful weather, which has already afforded us here, in three days, all the beauties of spring. We shall sleep at Amiens, and go from thence by Rouen, through Normandy, into Brittany. I shall write to you from every place I can; I shall stay only a few days at Rennes, to see M. de Chaulnes; and shall then go to *The Rocks*; I should die if I were to be long at Rennes. But can you conceive how impatient I am to receive your letters, and to know whether you have been bled, and how the air of Grignan agrees with that good head which has never injured you? How I hate the vapours that arise from the exhaustion of the spirits! how difficult they are to cure, when the remedy consists in yielding to dullness, and inaction of body and mind! To a person so lively and active as you are, this is martyrdom; alas! as you say, it is a strange alternative, either to be doomed to count the trees, or to be ill. I often reflect upon this, and read over your letters at my leisure; and, as I have nothing to do, I chat with you, and begin my letter before yours is arrived: do not follow my example; take care of yourself, and make Pauline write. I compared her writing with yours the other day; it is very like, and she spells well; is not this pretty? In short, my dear Comtesse, avail yourself, I be-

seech you, of this little secretary, who pleases me highly. Pauline must write, and you must dictate; nothing can be better for her or for you.

We have seen M. de Chaulnes's machinery; it is admirable, and formed upon a model of sublime simplicity. Five large playing fountains in the parterre and bowling-greens; a watering-place, which is a little canal; fountains for the office, kitchen, and wash-house, are supplied where formerly there was not water even to drink. Admire his courage, for all the country laughed at his attempt; he has converted a cabbage-plot into a young plantation that was scarcely seen at first, but is now perfectly beautiful: and all this was done whilst he was at Brittany, or at Versailles. Good heavens! my dear child, how dangerous my leisure is to you! I fear it will make you ill; it is tinctured with the melancholy of my reveries. I am grieved at being deprived of the conversation of the Chevalier; this union, which was so natural, was a source of comfort to me. I am also uneasy that I have not heard from the Marquis: how many sacrifices are to be made to God! I often trace him in everything that happens: we are all feeble and tottering under his all-powerful hand, which now puts Europe into such commotion, that it would be difficult to say what may be the consequence of this universal cloud.

I have just received your letter of the fourteenth, which gives me real joy; your headache has, in some degree, subsided, you will not allow us to say *vapours*; but what shall we do, if you deprive us of this word? for it is used for everything: till you Cartesians produce another, I must ask your permission to use it. Endeavour then to get rid of this disorder, and this giddiness, which incapacitate you for everything. The pain in your side has also given me great uneasiness; we had heard nothing of it for a long time; adhere to the admirable periwinkle, bring it to your own terms, and inform me of the state of your health; mine is still perfect, notwithstanding some sorrows which it is impossible to avoid. I admire the limits you wish to set to my life; this expression of your heart is

worthy of your affection: I am sensible of its full value. We leave here the first delightful dawn of spring; this Castle is very beautiful, but the elevation of yours makes it resemble the palace of Apollo.

LETTER 885

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Chaulnes, Sunday, April 24, 1689.

We thought of setting out to-day, my dear child, but this will not take place till to-morrow. Madame de Chaulnes was taken so ill the night before last with a sore throat, had so much difficulty to swallow, and her ear was so much swelled, that Madame de Kerman and myself knew not what to do: at Paris she would have been bled instantly, but here she was rubbed with the quieting balsam, and her ear stopped, and covered with brown paper; she was put to bed, covered up warmly, and was a little feverish: in truth, my dear child, we witnessed almost a miracle. This precious balsam performed so complete a cure during the night, that the next day, swelling, sore throat, and kernels, disappeared; so that she was able to *play at chuck-farthing* [1], and it was only from ceremony that she kept her room one day: this is really a divine remedy; take special care of what you have of it; we ought never to be without it. But, my dear child, how grieved I am at your headache! what do you mean by telling me you resemble M. Pascal? you make me shudder. To write like him is a fine thing; nothing can be so charming: but the cruel alternative, to have a head so delicate and so exhausted as his, which was the torment of his life, and at length cut him off in the midst of his career! We may bewilder our brains without being always immersed in Euclid's propositions; when the spirits are exhausted to a certain degree,

[1] Allusion to the miraculous cures Molière attributes to the *Médecin malgré lui.*

this has the same effect. I fear also that the air of Grignan may be injurious to you: ah, what an idea is this! I fear that you are already consumed and emaciated; would to God that your air was as serene as this! I fancy you sincerely regret that of Livry; bad as it was sometimes to those ill disposed towards it, how mild and gracious it was to us! how pleasant were those showers! we shall never forget that delightful little spot. My child, no one but Pauline is a gainer by your headache; for she is too happy in writing all your thoughts, and learning to hate her mother as you hate yours. She sees you declare to me, that in order to enjoy good health, you must cease to love me: what is there of good or agreeable that she has not learned since she has written for you? You are very humorous on the subject of the rain; what is rain? how is it made? is there such a thing as rain? And to compare that of Provence [1] to the tears of little children, who cry through anger, and not good-nature: what an excellent idea! Did not Pauline heartily laugh at it? Once more I must say I think her happy. You have not been bled, my dear child; I dare not advise you at such a distance; bleeding may not, perhaps, be proper for those whose spirits are exhausted. You are too good, to be fond of speaking of me; I am of much more consequence in your estimation than I am in reality, whether in body or mind. I am very comfortable here, would to God your health were as good as mine! but how grievous it is to be so far asunder! it is impossible now to embrace each other; this was not the case at Paris. I wish your buildings would erect themselves, as the walls of Thebes formerly did, by Amphion [2]; you play off the ignorant; Pauline, I am sure, is capable of giving an account of this passage of the fable.

[1] It seldom rains in Provence; sometimes not at all, or so little, during the summer, that the earth is more parched than moistened by it.

[2] Amphion, the son of Jupiter and Antiope, was considered as the inventor of music, insomuch that the poets feigned that the rocks followed him, and that the stones, at the sound of his lyre, disposed themselves without assistance to raise the walls of Thebes.

LETTER 886

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Pecquigny, Wednesday, April 27, 1689.

We set out on Monday from Chaulnes to sleep at Amiens, where Madame de Chaulnes is honoured and revered as you are in Provence; this is the only parallel case I ever knew. The Controller [1] gave us a very handsome fish supper, on account of its being St. Mark's day; yesterday we dined *en gras* to perfection. After dinner we arrived here, at a mansion that displays all the pride of the heiress of Pecquigny [2]. It is an old house, built on an eminence above the town, like Grignan; a fine Chapter, as at Grignan; a Dean and twelve Canons: I know not whether the foundation be as handsome, but there are terraces on the borders of the river Somme, which winds in a thousand meanders through the fields, which indeed are not to be found at Grignan. There are the remains of one of Cæsar's camps about a quarter of a league from hence, the intrenchments of which are still venerated; this is a companion to the bridge and aqueduct of du Gard [3]. You ask, "What, my dear mother, are you doing? are you not going into Brittany?" To this I answer, "We shall go, my dear; but as M. de Chaulnes will not be at Rennes till the ninth of next month, we have time enough for our journey, and shall not set out from hence these two days." This delay is not disagreeable to me, as I shall take my measures here to go to Nantes in the month of June or

[1] M. Chauvelin.

[2] Claire-Charlotte d'Ailly, only daughter and heiress of Philibert-Emmanuel d'Ailly, Lord of Pecquigny, Vidame of Amiens, had married Honoré d'Albert, Maréchal of France, and father of Charles d'Ailly, Duc de Chaulnes, who is mentioned in this letter.

[3] This bridge, which is a beautiful structure, is an ancient work of the Romans, upon the Gardon, in Lower Languedoc; it is built of hewn stone, of an amazing length and thickness, and has three stories of arches one above another, the top being an aqueduct.

July; I do not expect to have any real satisfaction all this while, because I shall not see you; you are my ruling star; I look and hope for another period, which is at God's disposal, as well as everything else in this world. But I often reflect upon your health, your head, and that piercing air which destroys you; the goodness of your Castle walls pleases you; and I admire your own goodness, which exposes you to this violence. Adieu, my dearest child; I embrace you, without being able to tell you how tenderly I love you. I am reading the *Life of the Duc d'Epernon*, which includes almost a whole century, and is very amusing.

LETTER 887

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Pecquigny, Saturday, April 30, 1689.

If I may believe the wind, my dear child, I am certainly at Grignan; your north-east wind in the open country cannot be more violent. I cannot help thinking we are on the point of entering into such an unseasonable month of May as we have often seen at Livry. We have been in this beautiful house these three days, where we have the most delightful prospect; we shall set out in an hour for Rouen, which we shall reach to-morrow, and where I shall find your letters; it is a great grief to me to have been deprived of them for these six days; they are so necessary to the subsistence of my heart and mind, that I faint when they fail me. We should have been at Rouen three days ago, if some business that Madame de Chaulnes has had to transact, and a desire of not reaching Rennes till the ninth of May, had not detained us here. For my part, it is of very little consequence to me to be a month upon the road; the interruption of our correspondence is the only thing that vexes me. I spent ten days very pleasantly at Chaulnes, receiving your letters regularly three times a week. I have been at Amiens, have seen

the Castle of Pecquigny, have written into Brittany, and have sent my orders there: I shall not be better off at Rennes; *The Rocks* alone will afford me an agreeable solitude, where I shall, at least, enjoy tranquillity. I am quite destitute of news at present; I am ignorant of the state of your health, whether you have been bled, whether Boreas still terrifies you with his blast; I own I am very much afraid of him upon your account; I know not what part you have taken with respect to Mademoiselle d'Alerac's marriage [1]; I know nothing of the Chevalier or of the Marquis, and I have all these things very much at heart. I hope I shall gain intelligence to-morrow at Rouen, from whence I will write to you again; the only reason of my writing to-day is, that this miserable letter may be forwarded on Monday, and that you may not have to add to the number of your uneasinesses, that of being in suspense respecting the state of my health, which is perfect; I wish yours was as good: my love for you induces me to take care of myself; I eat nothing but what is proper for me, never two meals alike; Madame de Chaulnes and Madame de Kerman follow the same rule. See, my child, whether I am convinced of your affection, since I abate nothing from that delightful tone, which tells me my conversation is agreeable to you: cherish, then, the same regard for me; doubt not that my love is full as great as yours, and with much greater reason. Adieu, my dear child. I do, indeed, love Pauline; I find myself prejudiced in her favour; I fancy that in the little altercations between you, I should be her advocate.

Madame de Chaulnes and Madame de Kerman say a thousand pretty things to you. The latter is a great reader, she knows something of everything; I have also a little of this tincture, so that our superficies agree very well together.

[1] Françoise-Julie de Grignan, married on the seventh of May following, to Henri Emanuel Hurault, Marquis de Vibraye.

LETTER 888

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Pont-Audemer, Monday, May 2, 1689.

I slept last night at Rouen, from whence I wrote you a line, merely to inform you that I had received two of your letters with great affection. I do not give way to all its effusions; for I should too often shrink from the combat, that is to say, from the society: it is enough for me to feel it, not to examine it too near. Rouen is eleven leagues from Pont-Audemer; we are come here to sleep. I have seen the finest country in the world, the most delightful meadows, and all the meanderings of the beautiful Seine, whose banks, for four or five leagues, are not inferior to the Loire; they are graceful, adorned with houses and trees, young willows, and little canals, that are cut from this great river; all this is, indeed, beautiful. I had no recollection of Normandy, I was too young when I saw it; alas! there is not, perhaps, one person to be found of all I formerly saw there; this is a melancholy reflection! I hope to find, at Caen, where we shall be on Wednesday, your letter of the twenty-first, and that of M. de Chaulnes. I constantly took my meals with the Chevalier till my departure; Lent did not separate us; I was delighted to converse with him on your affairs, I feel the loss of his society; I seem to be in an unknown country, by never entering into this subject. Corbinelli would not spend the evenings with him, his philosophy went to bed; I saw him in the mornings, and the Abbé Bigorre often came to tell us the news.

I shall watch your return, which will regulate mine; you are my ruling star. When I set out, M. de Lamoignon was at Bâville with Coulanges. Madame du Lude, Madame de Verneuil, and Madame de Coulanges, came from their convents to bid me adieu; they all met at my

house with Madame de Vins, who was just returned from Savigny. Madame de Lavardin also came with the Marquise d'Uxelles, Madame de Mouci, Mademoiselle de La Rochefoucauld, and Madame du Bois: so many farewells made my heart very heavy. I had on the preceding day embraced Madame de La Fayette, this was the day after the holidays; I was quite astonished at my departure; but, my dear child, I was in reality going to greet the arrival of spring in every place I passed through. It is a beautiful spring; so brilliant and mild, that I wish for you every moment to enjoy it with me, instead of still suffering that cruel Boreas, who destroys you, and kills me whenever I think of it.

I embrace Pauline, and pity her in not having a taste for history, it is a great amusement; does she, at least, like the *Moral Essays*, and *Abbadie* [1], as well as her dear mamma? Madame de Chaulnes sends you a thousand friendly remembrances; she takes great care of me, indeed too great. It is impossible to travel through a more beautiful country, with greater comfort, in greater style, and with less restraint. Adieu, my beloved, this is enough for Pont-Audemer; I will write to you from Caen.

LETTER 889

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Caen, Thursday, May 5, 1689.

I thought I should receive at this place your letter of the twenty-first of April, which I did not receive at Rouen; it would have been a pity to have lost it. Good heavens! in what a tone, with what a heart, for tones spring from the heart, and in what a manner do you talk of your affection for me! It is true, my dear Comtesse, the business of Avignon is a great consolation: if, as you say, it had

[1] Author of an excellent Treatise upon *The Truth of the Christian Religion.*

come at the flow of your finances, how greatly would it have facilitated a journey to Paris! Your expenses have been very great, and this will only make up deficiencies; but, as I said the other day, you must have lived to receive these favours from Providence; nevertheless, my child, this same Providence will enable you, by another channel, to come to Paris; we must wait its determinations.

It is not easy to comprehend how the Chevalier, with so many complaints, will be able to make a campaign; but he seems determined, at least, to show that he wishes it sincerely; this, I believe, no one doubted. He is very much inclined to go to Balaruc for the sake of the waters; I have seen the unfeigned approbation which the Capuchins bestowed on these waters, and as they confirm his good opinion of them, he must act as he pleases; he has good sense, and knows what he is doing. But, good heavens! what a man is our Marquis! will you believe us another time? When you were inclined to draw unfavourable consequences from his childish fears, we told you that he would be the thunderbolt of war; he is one, and you have made him so; indeed, he is an amiable youth; his dawning merit promises a noble growth: God preserve him! I am persuaded you do not doubt the tone in which I utter this.

I do not think you will have the courage to obey your Father *Lanterne* [1]. Would you deprive Pauline, who has a good understanding, of the pleasure of exercising it, in reading the beautiful pieces of Corneille; *Polyeuctes*, *Cinna*, and the others? To have only this scrap of devotion, without being led to it by the grace of God, seems to me like wearing boots without stockings; it has no connection or conformity with the rest. I do not find that M. and Madame de Pomponne treat Félicité [2] in the same manner, who learns Italian, and everything necessary to form the mind; I am persuaded that she will study and

[1] From *lanterneries*, foolish or ridiculous stories.

[2] Catherine-Félicité Arnauld de Pomponne, married to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Torci, and Minister of State.

explain the fine works in question. Madame de Vins was educated in the same way [1], and yet they will not fail to teach their daughter to be a Christian, what it is to be a Christian, and all the beauty and solidity of our religion: this is all I shall say to you on the subject. I believe Pauline imitates you in having an aversion to history; I think it very amusing. I am very much pleased with *The Life of the Duc d'Epernon* by Girard; it is not new, but it has been recommended to me by my friends, and by Croisilles, who have read it with pleasure.

A word respecting my journey, my dear child. We came here in three days from Rouen, without any adventure, except fine weather and a charming spring, eating nothing but the best of everything, going to rest early, and suffering no inconvenience of any kind. We arrived here this morning: we shall not set out till to-morrow, in order to reach Dol in three days, and then go to Rennes; M. de Chaulnes expects us with a lover's impatience. We were upon the sea-coast at Dive, where we slept; it is a fine country. Caen is the prettiest, cleanest, most cheerful, best-situated city in the world: its streets are spacious, its buildings elegant, and its churches magnificent; to this add its fields and walks, and, in short, that it is the birthplace of all our geniuses [2]. Our friend Segrais is gone to Messieurs de Matignon, which is a disappointment to me. Adieu, my beloved child; I embrace you a thousand times. You are now in the dust of your buildings.

[1] Sister of Madame de Pomponne.

[2] Jean-Renauld de Segrais, of the French Academy, was from Caen, as well as Malherbe, Huet, etc.

LETTER 890

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Dol, Monday, May 9, 1689.

We arrived here yesterday somewhat fatigued, and the horses still more so. This is the place where I came to see M. and Madame de Chaulnes four years ago. We came from Caen in two days to Avranches; we found the good Bishop [1] of this city dead and buried a week before; he was Tessé's uncle, a pious prelate, who was so much afraid of dying out of his diocese, that, to avoid this misfortune, he never quitted it. There are some, whom nothing but death could bring into theirs. We found all the domestics of this good man in tears; his shade, however, did not deny us a good supper and comfortable beds. From my chamber window I saw the sea and mount St. Michel, that proud hill, which you saw so haughty, and which saw you so beautiful: I recollect this journey with affection; do you remember our dining at Pontorson? We were a long time upon the shore, constantly looking at this mountain, and I constantly thinking of my dear child. At length we arrived here, where I defy death to catch the Bishop. We found a guard belonging to M. de Chaulnes, who is employed in receiving all the troops, who come from every quarter; the grief and astonishment of the inhabitants of Brittany are deplorable, as these are things to which they have been strangers since the wars of the Comtes de Montfort and de Blois: in short, nothing but tears and lamentations are to be seen and heard on every side. We shall rest to-day. My son is with his wife at Rennes; I shall take up my abode with the good Marbeuf, though she is not upon the best terms with this Duc and Duchesse, being entirely devoted to M. de Pontchartrain; but I must submit to this trifling mortification; I shall always follow

[1] Gabriel-Philippe de Froullay, Bishop of Avranches.

my own plan, I am upon good terms with everyone. It is only for the sake of conversing with you that I write; for I have neither an answer to make you, nor any news to communicate. Adieu. I am in very good health, and have got rid of my fatigue: this good Duchesse is no bad travelling companion; she loves and embraces you with her whole heart.

LETTER 891

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Rennes, Wednesday, May 11, 1689.

We arrived at Rennes yesterday from Dol, which is ten leagues; we have travelled a hundred long leagues in eight days and a half. The dust injures our eyes; but thirty women, who came to meet the Duchesse de Chaulnes, and whom we were obliged to embrace in the midst of the dust and in the burning sun, as well as thirty or forty gentlemen, fatigued us much more than the journey had done. Madame de Kerman, who is very delicate, sunk under it; but I went through the whole without any inconvenience. M. de Chaulnes came to dinner, and showed me great attention. I discovered my son in the vortex; we embraced each other cordially, and his little wife was delighted to see me. I gave my place in Madame de Chaulnes's carriage to M. de Rennes, and went with M. de Chaulnes, Madame de Kerman, and my daughter-in-law, in the Bishop's carriage; we had only a league to go. I came to my son's to change my dress and refresh myself, and from thence went to sup at the Chaulnes's Mansion; where I met with the good Marquise de Marbeuf, to whose house I returned to sleep, and where I am lodged like a real Princesse de Tarente, in a handsome chamber, hung with fine crimson velvet, and ornamented like that at Paris; a good bed, in which I slept well; a good hostess, who is charmed to have me for an inmate; a good friend, who has the kindest sentiments for us; all this must please

you. Here I am fixed for some days; my daughter-in-law, like myself, casts a longing eye towards *The Rocks*, impatient to go and repose herself there; she cannot long support the hurry and bustle occasioned by Madame de Chaulnes's arrival: we shall take our time; I always thought her very lively and pretty, very fond of me, and delighted with you and M. de Grignan; her regard for him makes us laugh [1]. My son is as amiable as ever, and appears very glad to see me; he is very handsome in his person, enjoys perfect health, and is extremely lively and witty; he talks much of you, and your son, whom he loves; he has heard such praises of him, as affect and surprise him; for, like us, he imagined he was only a little monkey, and all that is related of him is solid and serious. Talk to me a little of your health, my dear child; mine is perfectly good, which surprises me; you are troubled with giddinesses; how did you dare give them this name, since you have exploded *vapours*? The pain in your legs gives me pain: our Capuchin is no longer here, he has gone back to work with his dear comrade, whose eyes give you such disagreeable ideas; so that I can no longer obtain advice, either for you or Pauline. I entreat you to encourage this child's desire of pleasing you, and you will make her an accomplished woman; I advise you also to avail yourself of the facility you find in her, to serve you as a little secretary, with her free hand and good orthography; let this little personage assist you.

[1] Madame de Sévigné's daughter-in-law had never seen M. de Grignan.

LETTER 892

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Rennes, Sunday, May 15, 1689.

M. and Madame de Chaulnes treat us here with so much cordiality, that it is difficult to refuse them a few days more. I believe they will shortly set out for St.-Malo, where the King is making preparations; so that we shall show them great complaisance, at a trifling expense. This good Duchesse has quitted her numerous circle, to come and visit me so much like a friend, that you would love her for it; she found me just going to write to you, and has desired me to inform you of the credit she takes to herself in having brought me here in such good health. M. de Chaulnes often mentions you to me; he is entirely taken up with the militia; it is very strange to see people wear hats, who have never been accustomed to anything but blue bonnets; they neither understand what they are to do, nor what they are not to do: when their muskets were shouldered, and M. de Chaulnes appeared, if they wished to salute him, their arms fell on one side, and their hats on the other; they were told not to salute, and the instant after, when they were disarmed, if they saw M. de Chaulnes pass, they pressed their hats down with both hands, thus taking especial care not to salute him. They have been told that when in their ranks, they must not go either to the right, or to the left; and they suffered themselves to be run over, the other day, by Madame de Chaulnes's carriage, without stirring a single step, notwithstanding all that was said to them. In short, my child, the Lower Bretons are strange people; I cannot conceive what method Bertrand du Guesclin took to make them in his time the best soldiers in France. To go on with Brittany. I love Mademoiselle Descartes passionately; she adores you; when she was at Paris, you had not an opportunity of see-

ing enough of her; she told me she wrote to you, with all due respect to her uncle, that *blue* was a colour, and a thousand things about your son; is not this charming? she is to show me your answer. I send you an impromptu which she made the other day [1]; tell me what you think of it; I confess, I am very much pleased with it; it is natural, and not common.

Your Marquis is very good, very amiable, very attentive to his duty; he is a man. I find his reputation is quite established here, which surprises me; again, *God preserve him*, you cannot doubt my tone. How facetious you are in supposing that Madame de Rochebonne cannot be always in her present state, unless by throwing stones! what an idea! I am perfectly of this opinion, and that it was thus Deucalion and Pyrrha [2] so well restored the universe; these would do as much in case of necessity: the idea is super-excellent.

LETTER 893

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Rennes, Wednesday, May 18, 1689.

Thank God, my dear child, you have been bled, for I acknowledge this has very much delighted me; I am anxious to know whether your head has been relieved by it. Madame de Chaulnes, after having embraced the beautiful Comtesse, informs her, that like her she has an uneasy sensation in her legs, which does but ill agree with the gravity of the places in which God has put you both; and if you find yourself well from being bled, she desires you will inform her. Let her know, then, my dearest child,

[1] In the *Recueil de Coulanges* some verses of this amiable woman are to be found, but they did not appear of sufficient merit to be inserted here.

[2] See the *Rondeau* of Benserade upon *Deucalion and Pyrrha.*

for I shall be glad to find that my blood has not been spilt unnecessarily.

We have laughed heartily at your entreaty at the close of your letter, that I would take medicine; and in fact, I was just preparing to take the powder and the Capuchin's manna, but without any necessity, except the probable effects of Lent, and the length of time since I have taken any. So, I have been operated upon in one way, as you have been in another; I find myself quite well after it. I had visitors in the evening, M. and Madame de Chaulnes, Madame de Kerman, M. de Rennes, M. de St.-Malo, M. de Revel, Tonquedec, and several other illustrious Bretons, male and female. I fancy I see you when I look at Madame de Chaulnes, conducting yourself well to all, the proper distinctions being justly observed; for everything is measured, though natural and familiar. "I dine in one camp, and sup in another [1];" that is, in the morning with my dear hostess [2], and at night at the Chaulnes' Mansion. The Duc is constantly employed, sending away troops, and lodging them; nothing but reviews, drums beating, soldiers, regiments, and officers; two tables, one consisting of eighteen covers, and the other of ten. Everything is splendid, as the Chevalier says, and "Everything flies like a ferry-boat with the cable cut." Madame de Chaulnes thanked me for this comparison, and said to me in a whisper, "If I had children I would not act thus." We shall go on Monday to *The Rocks*, to rest ourselves a little; my son is quite impatient to be there, his wife ought to be there, and I pant for the woods of *The Rocks*. We shall say that our return will be speedy; God will direct our thoughts and our designs. I have just been reading a pretty letter that Mademoiselle Descartes has written me; let Pauline answer it for you, and do honour to M. Descartes and to religion; as a miracle is absolutely necessary, it is easy to introduce it as you shall find occa-

[1] This is a line from a song of Blot's, made during the wars of the Fronde.

[2] Madame de Marbeuf.

sion. I sometimes laugh at my friendship for Mademoiselle Descartes; I naturally turn to her, I have always something to say to her; she seems to me to be related to you, on her father's side [1]; and thence, perhaps, I borrow a small portion from my dear daughter. Adieu, my beloved child; take care of yourself, and remember that I am in perfect health. Pauline now writes a pretty hand, but for you it would have been a vile scrawl; this is not the only good you will do her. I am grieved to think, I did not nurse the Chevalier in his last illness; I fancy he is going to follow your advice, and that of M. de Louvois; he is preparing for the waters, and he will do well. Our Marquis still conducts himself admirably.

M. de Lavardin [2] has set out from Rome on his return; you will have Avignon a long while.

LETTER 894

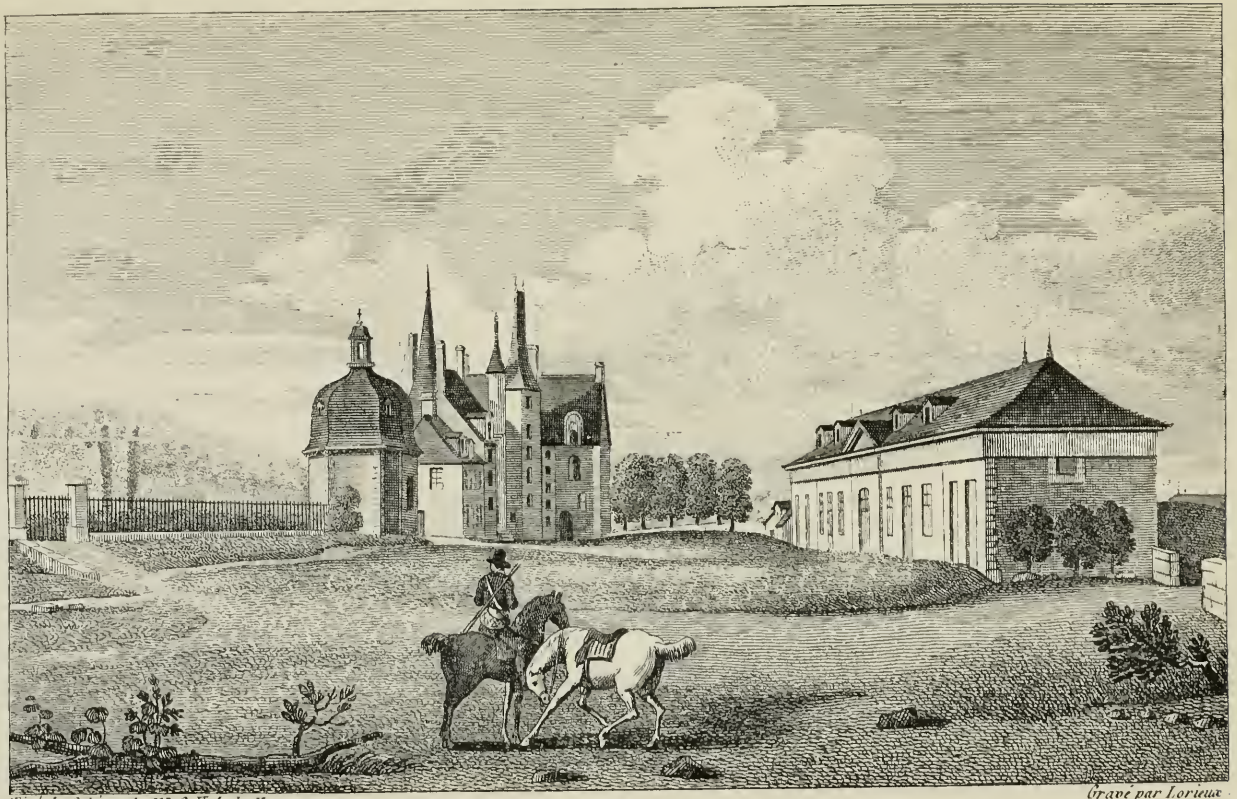
From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Rennes, Wednesday, May 25, 1689.

I am just setting out with my son and his wife for *The Rocks*. The Duc de Chaulnes has gone to Lower Brittany; and Madame de Chaulnes will set out immediately to wait for him at St.-Malo: they would not suffer us to leave them sooner. We have remained a fortnight through mere complaisance; for my part, I am so overwhelmed with visits and duties, that I am really at the last gasp. I require rest and quiet in the delightful woods of *The Rocks*; I shall be there to-night, and shall be very prudent; for I am constantly thinking how to please you. We all supped last night at M. de Rennes's; it is nothing but feasting; this is the land of good cheer; the meat is

[1] Madame de Grignan used to call Descartes her father.

[2] He was Ambassador Extraordinary to Rome, from whence he was recalled, after having received many insults from Pope Innocent XI. with regard to the franchises, and other complaints of the Court of France against that of Rome.



Tiré du Cabinet de Mr C.F.A. de Mussey. *Gravé par Lorieux*

"THE ROCKS", BRITTANY.

fine, and well larded, and the butter excellent. M. and Madame de Chaulnes would each have written to you, if they had not been so much hurried. Madame de Chaulnes said to me with tears in her eyes, and almost choked; "At least, inform the beautiful Comtesse, that I left you in good health." She is, indeed, an excellent friend, who acquits herself admirably of the part Providence assigns her. I have now been with her six weeks, and, during that time, her thoughts have been solely employed in taking care of me, in watching over me, and giving me the most unreserved proofs of her affection. Madame de Kerman has set out for Lower Brittany; she possesses some of the most amiable qualities in the world; you would love her if you knew her. Madame de Marbeuf is grieved at my leaving her; though I am part of the day upon her hands, she is loth to give me up; she knows, however, the necessity of my going to *The Rocks.* I will inform you when I go to Nantes, and when my son is at the head of the nobility. My whole attention is now engaged in securing the remittance of some bills of exchange to Beaulieu, who will take care to satisfy the most covetous of them all; I am just like a ship that wants to be careened. You desire me, my dear child, to acquaint you with my affairs; this is my present situation, and these are my designs; I have not yet done anything; I shall concert my measures with the Abbé Charrier in regard to Nantes.

The Chevalier will settle the most important of your affairs, before he sets out. I share in the joy you will have at seeing him, and the benefit I am sure he will receive from the waters of Balaruc. M. de Grignan will return triumphant, and will not deserve to be thrown over those shattered balustrades, which have made such convenient breaches for the execution of your design. But will you always be the dupe of this expense? recollect that the north wind has often played you the same trick. You alarmed me, for I thought it had carried away all the trees, and consequently all the nightingales; but it is with pleasure I find there are enough left for them to sing in, and

for you to know it is spring by their opening verdure; you have also gentle showers, which make you recall to mind our poor Livry. Your couplet is very pretty; the air which *Arcabonne* [1] has given us, is a valuable acquisition; it is played with such ease and success as are sure to please; I sing yours, but it is to myself. Your brother is quite dissipated; I can scarcely speak a word, or present your love to him; he will be more tractable at *The Rocks*. Madame de La Fayette informs me, that she has seen M. d'Aix, who can talk of nothing but your merit; she thinks you are the true bond of union between this prelate and all the Grignans. Adieu, my dear child, I must go; I am to enter our woods by the gate of Vitré; there are ten walks that you know nothing of, and my son is to surprise me with a parterre, and two new squares. We must quit this solitude to go to Nantes; this is a melancholy necessity.

This is the news from Brest: M. de Château-Regnault has safely landed his troops, arms, and money, in Ireland. Lord Herbert attacked M. de Gabaret, who was at sea with part of our fleet. M. de Château-Regnault, after having covered the convoy, for which he was appointed, came to the assistance of M. de Gabaret; the fight lasted seven hours; when the English sheered off, much disabled and shattered, into their ports. The French pursued them; and in their return they fell in with seven Dutch merchantmen, which they have brought into Brest; this capture is estimated at a million crowns [2].

[1] See the monologue of *Arcabonne* in *Amadis de Gaul,* Act II. scene 1. At that time an infinite number of parodies were made upon it.

[2] These events are too much confounded. The landing took place on the 21st of March, and the naval engagement on the 12th of May. It is known that King James could not support himself in Ireland for more than a year.

LETTER 895

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, June 1, 1689.

Pauline is too fortunate in being your secretary; she learns, as I told you, to think, and express her thoughts, by seeing how you express yours; she is learning the French language, which most women are ignorant of, but you take the trouble of explaining words to her which she would not understand; and by instructing her in so many subjects, you relieve your own head and mine. The tediousness of dictating, is not equal to the fatigue of writing; and my mind is never at rest, but when I know yours is so. Persevere, then, in instructing your daughter so properly, and in affording so great a relief to yourself and to me.

When you are assured of my being in perfect health, you do everything that can be done, which is to dread its interruption. This too sometimes engages my thoughts, and not finding any of those little inconveniences with which you are acquainted, I say with astonishment, I must, however, expect that this happy state will change; and I conclude, that I ought, as upon all other occasions, to submit to the will of God, and believe, that in inflicting ills upon me, he will give me patience; I will therefore enjoy my present lot.

The Coadjutor[1] has had the colic; he has passed two more stones. I write nonsense to him; I tell him I do not lend him my apartment for the purposes of lying-in; that he should be satisfied with the two painful children he brought forth last year, to which I was both witness and godmother; and ask what he intends to do with this cruel fertility, which will perhaps strangle its father, if it be

[1] The Archbishop of Arles, whom she still calls, from habit, the Coadjutor, as he was so styled during the life of M. d'Arles, his uncle.

not mollified and managed. I sincerely pity the Chevalier, and am delighted that he is convinced of the care I would have taken of him in his illness. I do not understand how anyone can hesitate in giving the preference to the waters of Balaruc; I was present when he was advised to go thither; after its virtues had been set forth, this was determined on. From thence, my dear child, he will pay you a visit, and this will be a great happiness to you and all his family; you will have many things to talk of, you will not want for conversation.

The idea of comparing the north wind to the chattering of the ladies of Aix, appears to me very humorous. I know how attentive you are to this sort of company: I believe you are still more so to the wind; and if I may judge from your manner of speaking of it, you wish more ardently for its absence than that of the Court of your ladies. You may be certain that your extraordinary terror arises from the unexpected fall of the tower; it was not placed there for nothing, it was a screen, and broke, as you say, the impetuosity of the storm. You are unroofed, and I am very uneasy respecting you; and, indeed, M. d'Arles might very well have dispensed with pulling down the towers of his forefathers. I did not know that he had found Versailles so agreeable; you tell me a thousand things I was ignorant of before. He will then have the honour of the civil petition. Rochon has returned, this is fortunate. Madame de Buri's judgment with regard to the business of the Grand Council was not amiss; she thought to cast us into half-yearly labyrinths, from whence we could never emerge; to involve us in all the intricacies of chicanery; we were warned of it miraculously; everything has taken a happy turn in this affair. By the bye, the labyrinth of *The Rocks* is a very pretty one, our walks are delightful; my son's folly is to wish for M. de Grignan here, and to think he would find amusement. We are reading *The Variations*[1] by M. de Meaux; ah!

[1] *L'Histoire des Variations des Eglises Protestantes,* by Bossuet: a master-piece of controversy, in which we often recognise the hand of

how well this delightful book is suited to my taste! The time flies like lightning, though without amusement, and even in sorrow; and it carries us along with it.

It has not rained these six weeks, and has been intensely hot; now it is cold, though there has been no rain, and we have fires again. I told you that all the nobility of these cantons, to the number of five or six hundred, had chosen your brother for their chief; this is considered as a very great compliment; but it will occasion a ridiculous expense. He has not yet received orders for setting out; we wish that such an unnecessary encampment may not take place.

LETTER 896

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, June 5, 1689.

I have received both your letters at once; I am glad I resisted the desire of making myself unhappy. Martillac assures me you are in perfect health; and that no remedies were ever more timely administered: they have at length cured you of your indispositions; this alone was sufficient to bring them into repute. I have lost sight of the uneasiness which the Duchesse de Chaulnes felt in her handsome legs; she often writes to me without mentioning it. I have informed you, my dear child, of the good state of my health; this medicine did me neither good nor harm. I have no vapours, nor do I take Jacob's essence; for there is no need of medicine when we are well: I no longer start in my sleep, and my hands are well; in short, I cannot help thinking you are guilty of ingratitude, to be so much concerned at my health, instead of returning thanks to God,

the great orator. But the schisms of the churches, whose doctors did not pretend to infallibility, and who laid down as a principle the liberty of examining and interpreting, proved little against these churches. This work followed the revocation of the edict of Nantes, as the *Exposition de la Foi* preceded it. The one seems a preparative to it, the other a justification of it.

and supposing I deceive you, when I tell you the simple truth. I am astonished at my own situation, and, like you, anticipate evil. It is not possible, I think, for this state to continue long, and we must expect the usual indispositions attendant on human nature; God is the master, and I submit to his will. He commands the Chevalier to seek relief at Balaruc, and I am convinced he cannot do better: you will have the pleasure of seeing him at Grignan, and this pause will do him as much good as the waters. You will have a delightful society; when it shall please Providence to add your mother and your son, I shall return thanks as for a precious favour, but I dare not look so far into futurity. It is singular that Madame de Bagnols, who left this boy an infant, should find him an established, resolute, intrepid soldier, who throws his arms round her neck and embraces her: he is now perfect; he wanted nothing but this degree of ease and familiarity; he was timid, but he is no longer so; how amiable he is, and what a good course he takes! *God preserve him*, for to this we must always return. Madame de La Fayette will write to M. de Boufflers; your son meets with friends on every side; at first they were yours, they are now his. I hear that the Chevalier is to set out to-day, at which I am highly delighted.

God forgive me, but M. de Lavardin's return gives me great joy; I can comprehend all the pleasure you receive from Avignon; it is Providence who sent you this succour. I am wholly occupied with you and your affairs; I do not forget my own, nor to give the necessary orders; my chief object at present is to be here and remit some cash: but it is very difficult to touch it in this country; the troops ruin everything. All possible precautions are taken, as if the Prince of Orange thought of nothing but us; and probably nothing will be realised, but the desolation of this Province. My son is still with me; we tremble lest he should be obliged to obey M. de Chaulnes's orders, and repair immediately to head the nobility; this is called being Colonel of a *regiment of nobility*; it includes both

that of Rennes and Vitré, making in the whole five or six hundred gentlemen. Our soldiers now begin to perform their exercise with a tolerable grace, and will soon do as well as the rest; everything appears ridiculous in the beginning; I assure you there are some at Vitré that make a very good figure.

Do not suppose, my dear child, that by taking up my abode at Madame de Marbeuf's, I had any sort of misunderstanding with M. and Madame de Chaulnes; I mentioned it to them, and they were very well pleased; besides, as Madame de Kerman was with them, I should not have had a moment's rest in that house. I was extremely well accommodated at the good Marquise's; and I succeeded in bringing about an accommodation between her and the Duc and Duchesse, so that, through their regard for me, they forgot all that had past, and invited her to dinner. Her offence was, having received M. de Pontchartrain at her house, having given him a magnificent supper, and said, that he was considered as the saviour and restorer of the Province. You may guess the effects of such a speech: she denies it, and no more is said on the subject. I am sorry Pauline's cold prevents her writing for you; I am now accustomed to her writing, and think it is a relief to you. I have not tormented you with Mademoiselle Descartes's letter, she would send it to you. You will, no doubt, acquit yourself well in answering it; it is a pretty little question to discuss, and you will treat it with an air of lightness that will easily bring you off.

If Madame du Bois-de-la-Roche's brother had joined to his Parisian dialect, his sister's horse-laugh, it would have been impossible for you to have resisted. Larrei will be with you: he is, I believe, a son of the late M. Lénet, who was attached to the late Prince, and was very young when I used to laugh with him. How well you express yourself, in speaking of the haughtiness and confidence of youth! We depend only on God and our sword; nothing is impossible, everything yields, is flexible, and easy. In a different character, and possessing less beauty, I also

was sensible to the charms of this situation and its prosperities; but, as you say, a time comes, when we must change our style. We find that we stand in need of all the world; we are engaged in a law-suit, we must take the advice of counsel, must accommodate ourselves to all, must live with the living, must cramp our genius on one side, and give it free scope on the other: for my part, I find that your knowledge of things is a thousand degrees beyond the extent of my capacity, and I never cease to admire it.

It is dismal weather, it rains, the wind blows, and it is very cold; no more walks; send us some of your heat, some of your sun; we thank you for your north wind, but he is rather too exalted a companion for us.

LETTER 897

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, June 8, 1689.

The resolution you have formed of going to your estate in Avignon, is a very good one; it is right that people who so willingly give you, what they gave to the vice-legate, should have the gratification of seeing you: a more convenient time could not be chosen; after this, you will be at liberty, and will have no occasion to quit your Castle, but when it suits yourself. By the time you receive this letter, you will have a tolerable good society; ah! is it possible that the Chevalier can be with you? how happy you will both be! When will my turn come?

To pass as quickly as possible over the chapter of health, I assure you that the medicine I took, was only to chime in with the authors, who say we should now and then have recourse to medicine well or ill; and I am really so well as to be terrified at it: it is not natural, to be wholly free from the complaints that used to trouble me. I know not what Providence reserves for me; in the meanwhile I

am economical of my health; I am prudent in my diet, and no longer have a wish to walk in the evening air, or to look at the moon; I begin to correct myself of these follies, and think it strange that even at Livry I was still as full of them, as when I was twenty: but this is no longer the case. After having read and talked sufficiently, we separate; I take a solitary walk in the woods, and read your delightful letters, with a mixture of pleasure and pain. The Chevalier makes me very uneasy respecting the situation of M. de La Trousse; pray tell me all you know of it. I believe, my dear child, that this letter will find you all assembled at Grignan, and that you have not left Pauline at Aubenas; I shall be very happy to influence you in her favour, and to know how she stands with you: I assure you that gentleness and reasoning will produce the greatest effect with her; and, indeed what other means can succeed with a person of understanding, who endeavours only to correct herself and to please you? My son is still with us: we tremble at the dreadful mandate to repair into Lower Brittany, there to incur great expense, without any other advantage than depriving us of the company of our indefatigable reader; this enrages us.

I enclose you a note, which Madame de Marbeuf desires me instantly to send to you, to know if it be true that the son of M. de M**** is so rich and so well settled; I can answer for the beauty of his house, furniture, and plate. She wants to know the grandeur of his house, meaning his alliance; I say that it is very large, meaning literally his house; we must pass over this, as well as we can, and dwell upon the rest, which is very good. I should be very happy to serve this worthy man, who seems to be your friend. He appears inclined to emigrate, and marry his son in our Brittany. I shall do my best to effect this, and so will my son, as soon as you have answered this note, and I know whether it will be agreeable to you. This is enough for to-day, my dear Comtesse; you are in too good company to write or read long letters.

LETTER 898

From Monsieur DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, June 12, 1689.

I would rather have been the author of your letter to Mademoiselle Descartes, than of an epic poem, or half the works of her uncle; I am delighted with it, and never did Rohault [1], whom you quote, speak so clearly upon the subject. With regard to myself, I can assure you, that if the Inquisitor of Avignon will give you leave, after you have explained your doctrine to him, I shall hold it for orthodox, and even for the only rational one we can have in a mystery of faith. Do not suppose, however, that this letter which I so willingly praise, and even admire, is without a fault; it has one which I have had a good deal of trouble to correct: the writing is as difficult to decipher, as the subject upon which you reason is to be understood; in fact, it is not writing, but figures, some of one shape, some of another; it is a great and beautiful variety of hieroglyphics, which cannot fail to please the sight, when they are no longer intelligible to the understanding. My mother is perfectly well, make yourself easy therefore upon this head; she leads so quiet and regular a life, that for this reason it is almost irksome; but this is not worth a thought. I embrace you a thousand times, my beautiful little sister; do as much for me to your illustrious spouse, and give my love to Pauline.

[1] A celebrated Cartesian philosopher.

LETTER 899

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, June 12, 1689.

My son is delighted with your letter; and know that I bestow on it an equal share of admiration. I understand it, I assure you I understand it, and I do not suppose anything more to the purpose could have been said on this redoubtable subject. For a long time I said in my ignorance, "Is not a miracle necessary, to explain this mystery according to Aristotle's philosophy? if he requires one, Descartes is in the same predicament, and there is more sense in what he says, till we come to the part which destroys it all." The good Mademoiselle Descartes will be in raptures; she will say nothing, she will admire you only with a very amiable Cartesian, a friend of my son, who is truly worthy of being admitted into his confidence. Be at rest, my dear child, this letter will do you great honour, without occasioning you any uneasiness. We are here in a state of tranquillity, peace, and silence, somewhat different from yours at Avignon; you are probably still there. It is a handsome city, I fancy it is now quite brilliant; you must have been received there with great acclamations of joy; I have accompanied you in all its festivities, for your presence must have rendered the amusements perpetual. I long to receive your first letter from thence. Your compliance with M. de Grignan's wish is very proper; when he is right you should not thwart him; you have taken all your measures well. I very much pity M. de La Trousse, I am told he gives up everything to his health; he is going to Bourbon; this is very far from Barège, whither he was destined.

We are in the sad expectation of having poor Sévigné snatched from us, to go and take the command of this Regiment of Nobility, for we do not call it the *arrière-ban*. M. and Madame de Chaulnes are at Rennes, they

are going shortly to St.-Malo, we shall pay them a visit upon their return. M. de Chaulnes concluded a marriage the other day, which gave me pleasure, between the little du Guesclin, and a very pretty girl with a large fortune; when he had with great difficulty settled the articles, he said, "Let us draw up the contract;" the parties consented, and he immediately resumed, saying, "What prevents their being married to-morrow?" Everyone exclaimed, "There must be wedding-clothes, a toilet, and linen."—He laughed at this. M. de Rennes gave a dispensation of two banns, and the next day being Sunday, one was published in the morning, and they were married at noon; after dinner, the little bride danced like an angel; she had learned at Paris of the Duchesse's master, and had caught her air: the next day she was Madame du Guesclin, and had saved twenty thousand livres that would otherwise have been spent in the wedding. This is intended as a lesson for M. de Grignan, when he is disposed to make a match in his government; both families were delighted with this saving. You care little about this wedding, but, as I was present, I said, "I will give my daughter an account of it some day." It is consistent with good sense to rise superior sometimes to trifles and customs. Adieu, my beloved child; I walk with you every day, though you do not see me; which is owing to the constant bustle of Avignon.

LETTER 900

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, June 15, 1689.

What a difference, my dear Comtesse, between the splendid, brilliant, and dissipated life you lead at Avignon, and the life we lead here, simple, plain, and solitary! This is agreeable to the order of things, and the order of God; and I cannot believe that, however you may be tinc-

tured with the disposition of an anchoret, these honours, and this respect, from persons of merit and rank, can be unpleasant to you; I should even have some difficulty in believing it, were you to tell me so; in truth, it is not in nature, not to like sometimes to be placed above the rest of the world. When I read in the life of the old Duc d'Epernon, how grieved he felt at being compelled to leave his fine government of Provence, all those beautiful cities, says the historian, so great, and so considerable: how much M. de Guise thought himself honoured and gratified by the appointment; what a sure mark it was of a sincere peace with the King; what joy he felt at being beloved and honoured there; I feel that, God having given you the same place, with all the accommodations, distinctions, and marks of confidence, which you now enjoy, it cannot in reason and sincerity be styled, the most ridiculous and disagreeable thing in the world. I think nothing should give you concern, but domestic affairs and great expenses; for, in other respects, if such a place can be preserved for our pretty little Captain, I can assure you it will be a very fine thing. I know your expenses are so great, that if they were long to continue, I should say to you as I did to Madame de Chaulnes, "You seem to me *in a ferry-boat with the cable cut.*" But they are at an end, you are now in your Castle, where, though you have not much time to yourself, you will not be in such a vortex; it could not be borne in the long run; rest is necessary at all events: nevertheless if the expense could be ascertained in that charming city, and you were to pass a winter in Provence, it would be pleasant to be under the rays of so brilliant a sun. M. de Caderousse has bestowed the highest eulogium upon it, by his recovery to life. Madame de Castries's daughter is very handsome, and Madame de **** is very amiable, and sings like an angel; M. de Grignan would be in love with her. *Basset* terrifies me; it is a treacherous and enticing game; a hundred pistoles are soon lost at it, and your journey must cost you enough without this addition. But see to what a

length the rage of never ceasing to talk of Avignon, or your grandeur, carries me.

My son is going to Rennes to receive M. de Chaulnes's orders, to collect and put in motion those *noble* regiments. He will afterwards return, and spend some days with us; and then, without danger, he will keep a great table twelve or fifteen leagues from hence—this is the misfortune. M. and Madame de Chaulnes are going to St.-Malo. Corbinelli has made me laugh by the reasons he assigns for not having written to you: an extreme desire of writing to you, added to a thousand opportunities of doing so, and a strong conviction that it was his duty; you must be very fastidious indeed if you did not yield to such good reasons. He informs me that M. de Soissons [1] attacks M. Descartes very vigorously, merely in the hope of pleasing M. de Montausier; for it is said he does not understand what he endeavours to disprove. Mademoiselle Descartes considers it as a great insult, after the infinite compliments she received from him at Paris, on the eulogiums due to her uncle and the immortality of his name; there are people who will answer him. "What," says Corbinelli, "a man to attack the judgment of a Prince and of Madame de Grignan, and M. de Vardes!"

I embrace you, my dear love; you have been in great agitation, repose yourself, I entreat you: I am in such perfect health, that I cannot understand what God intends to do with me. I read the *Treatise upon submission to His will* [2], which is always new to me. What a happiness it is to be fond of reading! I have written to the Marquis; every possible encomium is passed on this little gentleman. Remember me in the most friendly manner to all your circle. Are you not fatigued, Chevalier, after your journey?

[1] Pierre-Daniel Huet, Bishop of Soissons, afterwards Bishop of Avranches, was one of the most learned men of his time, and possessed an extensive genius. The Duc de Montausier, governor of Louis, Dauphin of France, son of Louis XIV. made choice of him as sub-governor to that Prince.

[2] This is the second Treatise in Vol. I. of *Moral Essays*.

LETTER 901

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, June 19, 1689.

I dearly love your letters from Avignon; I read them over and over again; they cheer my imagination and the silence of our woods. I seem to be there with you, I share your triumph, converse with you, entertain your company, and honour their nobility and their merit; in short, I enjoy your beautiful sun, the charming banks of your beautiful Rhône, and the mildness of your air; but I do not play at *basset*, because I am afraid of it: I can understand, however, that a life of such continual motion may fatigue you; and I am uneasy lest your want of rest should make you ill. You must have arrived at Grignan, according to my calculation, a day sooner than the Chevalier, who was at Lyons on the eleventh, and set out from thence on Sunday the twelfth; so that you must have been there on Monday, and he on Tuesday; no, you both arrived on the same day: tell me if I have guessed rightly.

Madame de Vins has sent my congratulations to M. de Pomponne on her son's regiment, and M. de Pomponne has written me a very pleasing letter, so that it is he who writes me word of the pleasure I take in this regiment. My son has just set out for Rennes, he will return tomorrow; but in a week he will fix himself there with his nobility, to teach them to form themselves into squadrons, and to give them a war-like air; he is quite disconsolate at being thus obliged to return to a profession which he had so cordially quitted; he will keep a terrific table; this is the *tu autem*, and *cui bono*? in short, it is the will of God. We shall be alone, but the fine weather is returning to our assistance, with good books, work, and fine walks. Do not trouble yourself, my dear child, to answer my old letters, I do not recollect them; talk to me of yourself, and

all that is at Grignan. I wish the Chevalier a good state of health, and that he may find some consolation for his misfortunes, in the charms of your delightful society, and that of all his family; tell me his opinion of the buildings, and if Carcassonne's is always to remain with its arms folded. I embrace the Comte, Pauline, and all who wish to be remembered by me.

LETTER 902

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, June 22, 1689.

Ah! what a beautiful procession [1]! how holy! how magnificent! how suitable are the demonstrations of respect! how well adapted all the external parts of it, in comparison of your profanations at Aix [2], with your *Prince of Love* [3], and *paper horses* [4]! What a difference! I am struck with the beauty of this cavalcade, to which is added military music. The perfumes scattered so opportunely, the noble and respectful manner of saluting you; M. de Grignan's good looks, which are so well suited to these occasions; in short, the whole ceremony affects and pleases me. This is the place for the *blue ribbon*; this ornament is intended for persons of M. de Grignan's birth and station; and you say truly, that the ostentation of modest men does not offend the pride of others; because it is neither ostentation nor pride, and justice is done to real merit. I own, my dear child, that in the midst of all

[1] The procession at Avignon on the day of the Fête-Dieu.

[2] The indecency of the procession exhibited at Aix the same day, is carried to extravagance. This procession was instituted by René d'Anjou, King of Naples and Sicily, Comte de Provence, who regulated the cavalcade and ceremony. A satire upon this subject may be seen, in a little Latin work, under the title of *Querela ad Gassendum.*

[3] The *Prince of Love* has for several years been omitted.

[4] There are men in the procession, who dance about on pasteboard horses, who appear like a new species of Centaurs.

this clamour, the communion surprised me: it is so short a time since Whitsuntide, that your public situation perhaps makes these demonstrations necessary; for, otherwise, I should not suppose you more pious than St. Louis, who communed only five times in a year. La Chaise [1] was asked with some asperity, where he met with this circumstance; he showed a manuscript of one of the almoners of that King, which is in His Majesty's library. In short, my child, you know your religion and your duty better than anyone; this is a noble science.

You are now at Grignan; I hope you will sleep better there than at Avignon, where you could not find time for rest. I have indeed serious fears for your health. I am very desirous of knowing, when the Chevalier is to set out for Balaruc. M. d'Arles intends going to Forges; does he still persevere in obtaining the civil petition? M. Baron, one of your judges, is dead; this is a reason why you should not let this petition languish; it is true that death interferes everywhere so indiscriminately, that there is no building upon anything. You said well, "Shall we never lay aside the custom of attaching ourselves to these wretched mortals?" Ah, it is very imprudent! and yet by what chains are we not rivetted? You have made me laugh, by talking to me in a style I am perfectly acquainted with, of following Madame Cornuel step by step, for I see and hear you; if health can furnish such hopes, I may possess them; but God knows I desire nothing more than his will; the futility of wishes should always recall us to this submission. I still lead the quiet tranquil life I have described to you, without restraint, in good society, and, occasionally, engaged in walking and reading; your time at Avignon is passed in a very different manner, but agreeably to the difference of our destinies. My son will set out on Sunday for Rennes, where he is to keep a good table; and this, perhaps, is the only warfare that will be carried on. M. and Madame de Chaulnes are at St.-Malo,

[1] Jean Filleau de La Chaise, author of *A Life of St. Louis*, much esteemed.

they wish very much to see me. It seems we are no longer so much terrified as we were at the Prince of Orange, and perhaps these Regiments of Nobility, for we must speak with propriety, will not march farther than Rennes; so that all the blows will fall upon your poor brother. I tenderly embrace my dearest Comtesse, and think I am saying a great many things to the Chevalier. Ah, he is really at Grignan! he is no longer confined to that little apartment! he sees you, converses with you! how happy he is in my opinion, notwithstanding his indisposition! I had written to Mademoiselle de Méri on her brother's illness [1]; she informs me that since the arrival of the brother de la Charité, he is much better; that his animal spirits are again in motion, that he has recovered his feeling in his legs, and that he is coming to Paris in a litter.

Mademoiselle Descartes is charmed with the beauty and excellence of your understanding; she thinks Brittany unworthy of seeing your letter, except one very amiable man, whom she calls her master, and who admires you beyond anything he ever before admired. It is true that your letter is a perfect composition, and written in a style that does not savour of the dust of philosophy.

LETTER 903

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, June 26, 1689.

At length, my dear child, you have left your charming Avignon; if this residence has not tired you more than the account you have given of it has occasioned grief to me, you will retain a very agreeable idea of it, and a great desire of returning. All your descriptions of it have highly amused us, and particularly your brother, who was form-

[1] The Marquis de La Trousse.

erly delighted, like you, with the beauty of the situation, the mildness of the air, the freshness arising from those two fine rivers [1]: but what you observed with greater attention than he, was the noble antiquity of the churches, honoured, as you say, with the presence and residence of so many Popes; the beauty of the Chapter, which represents so many Cardinals, by the magnificence of the dresses [2]; this is so singular, that we have nothing at all like it in France. I have seen the masquerade of the Penitents, which cannot fail of being pleasing: but you triumph in speaking of the Jews [3]; I feel pity for them, and pray, with the church, that God may remove the veil that prevents them from seeing that Jesus Christ is come; since the Queen and Madame de Béthune have not been able to convince them of this truth, they must not be persuaded by you. What a miserable and ridiculous representation of that noble temple, of that precious ark, of those respectable laws! But whence arises that bad smell that overcomes all the perfumes? it is doubtless the nauseous odour of incredulity and ingratitude, for virtues are of a sweet savour. The hatred which we bear for them is extraordinary. *Esther* has however revived a pleasing idea of the young Jewesses; our Christians would not have viewed them with horror. In short, I find myself disposed to repeat to you very foolishly all you have related, which will probably prove tedious to you; but I have suffered the pleasure of retracing such ideas, which are a sort of acknowledgment for the affection that has induced you to give me these descriptions, to run away with me.

But could you never take another journey to Avignon, without again encountering the same agitations? could you enjoy no repose in that fine climate, nor the society of any of the rational beings who inhabit it? could you not sleep better? that is, sleep at all, for you had no

[1] The Rhône, and the Durance, which empties itself into the Rhône about a league below Avignon.

[2] The choir habits of the Canons of the metropolis of Avignon are red, like those of the Cardinals.

[3] This relates to the Jewish festival at Avignon.

time for it. Must you always be engaged in that destructive *basset*? If a general revolution were to take place in these things, it would be delightful, and the Chevalier would find himself much better for it: for the air of Grignan is very different from that of Avignon. You have stolen all hearts; this I have no difficulty to believe. For myself, my dear child, I am not yet thinking of my journey to Nantes; I am persecuting people there who are in my debt, though I am but little disposed for such proceedings. I have a long account to settle with the new farmer, and, in this respect, the Abbé Charrier will be very useful to me; I return you a thousand thanks for all you have said to him on my account. You see plainly, my love, that what I say of *myself* is as tiresome as what you say of *yourself* is entertaining. My son went yesterday to Rennes, to join his Regiment of Nobility; but when he is here, he never sees any other passages of your letters but those I show him—such are the terms; so that you may give me an account of your expenses and losses at Avignon. Tell me if Mademoiselle de Grignan is to remain any time at Gif, and whether the Coadjutor will have the honour of the civil petition. I informed him that Madame de La Faluère is at Paris; it is for him to govern her, and prevent her from serving her foolish friend. All that interests you is so dear to me, and I am so occupied with it, that I think seriously of nothing else; I am, however, perfectly obedient to the will of Providence, without whose aid, I reckon upon nothing. Adieu, my dear child, who are more worthy of being beloved than any daughter in creation. I embrace M. de Grignan, the Chevalier, and Pauline. My daughter-in-law sends affectionate remembrances to you: she takes great care of me without restraint, allowing me constantly *holy liberty*. I enclose a note from Madame de La Fayette: you will see what Boufflers says of our child; I am sure Barbantane will never throw the dice-box at his head, in playing at backgammon, as he did at the Prince d'E****'s, who returned the compliment with the candlestick: swords were

then drawn, great disorder ensued, and the Chevalier de Vassé was killed in attempting to separate them.

LETTER 904

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, June 29, 1689.

I cannot tell you how much I pity the Chevalier; there are few examples of such a calamity; his health has been in so desperate a state for some time, that he can neither reckon upon past disorders, regimen, nor season. I feel his situation painfully, both with regard to himself, and with regard to your son, who will be an infinite loser; we may see all this at a single glance, without offending his modesty by the detail. I am convinced of this truth, and I always look towards God, who gives our Marquis a M. de Montégut, who is wisdom itself; and all the rest of the regiment, who, to please the Chevalier, do wonders for the little Captain. Is not this a sort of consolation not to be found in other regiments less attached to their Colonel? The Marquis [1] has written me so affectionate a letter, that I have been affected at it; he does not cease to praise M. de Montégut; he rallies me, and passes some compliments on the fine piece I wrote on M. d'Arles; it was excellent of you to send it to him. He says he has renounced poetry, that he has scarcely time to breathe, that he is always on wing, and never two days at rest; they have to deal with a very vigilant man. Pray tell me some news of the Chevalier; I have hope from the change of climate, the virtues of the waters, and still greater from the sweet consolation of being with you and his family. I consider him as a beneficent river, with more justice than you consider me as one; he will give a good turn and good order to everything. It is true, that the county of Avignon was

[1] Louis-François, Marquis (afterwards Duc) de Boufflers, Peer and Maréchal of France.

a gift of Providence that we had no reason to expect; but let us turn our thoughts from disagreeable subjects; yours are but too full of them, and my letters are incompetent to divert you. You must preserve your health, the loss of which would be a much greater evil; mine is still excellent. The medicine of the Capuchins, in which there is no senna, is as pleasant as a glass of lemonade; I took it, to think no more about it; and as I had taken none for a long time, I did not feel it. You make this remedy of too much consequence, my son did not even keep within doors for it; it is only intended to remove what is superfluous, and does not make you look for the moon at mid-day, nor arouse the sleeping lion. We lead so regular a life, that it is scarcely possible to be ill. We rise at eight, and I often walk till nine, when the bell rings for mass, to breathe the fresh air in the woods: after mass we dress, bid each other good day, return and gather orange-flowers, dine, and work or read till five. Since my son's absence, I read to save his little wife's lungs; I leave her at five, and retire to these delightful groves, with a servant who follows me: I take books with me, change my route, and vary my walks; from a book of devotion, I turn to one of history, this creates a little change: I think of God and his over-ruling providence, possess my soul, and reflect on futurity; at length, about eight o'clock I hear a bell. This is the summons to supper; I am sometimes at a good distance, I join the Marquise in her beautiful lawn, and we are a little society to each other; we sup in the dusk; I return with her to the *Place Coulanges,* in the midst of the orange-trees, and view with an envious eye *the awful gloom* through the beautiful iron gate, which you have never seen; I long to be there, but feel that it would not be prudent. I prefer this life infinitely to that of Rennes; is it not a fit solitude for a person who should think of her salvation, and who either is or would be a Christian? In short, my dearest child, there is nothing but you that I prefer to the tranquil repose I enjoy here; for I own, with pleasure, that I would willingly pass some more time

with you, if it pleased God. I must have the strongest conviction of your regard, to give so much latitude to my pen in the recital of this melancholy life. I have sent part of your letter to my son, it belonged to him: *when it is for Jupiter we change*: this is a delightful passage; your mind is lively and free: your courage, strength, and merit, are superior to any; you are beloved in the same degree. Adieu, my best and dearest child; I hope you will talk to me of Pauline and the Chevalier. I embrace the Comte, who *is loved* too well.

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *the Younger, to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter.*)

Indeed, my dear sister, it is true; I certainly love him too well [1]. I dare not tell you that I love his son also, I should blush with shame; I only entreat him to call me no longer his aunt; I am *so little and so delicate,* that I can be only his cousin. Madame de Sévigné's health is not at all like mine, it is stout and strong: I am so careful of her that I should almost make you jealous: I must own, however, that I put no restraint upon her: I let her go into the woods alone, with no other companion than books; and she falls into them as naturally as a weazel into a toad's mouth. Though I have the same taste and the same liberty, I remain in the lawn *al' dispetto* (in spite) of complaisance, which we explode from the number of virtues, when we can give it the proper name, and it is not our choice. You delight me, my dear sister, in telling me that Madame de Sévigné loves me; I have discernment enough to know the value of her regard, and to love her heartily in return. We have taken great interest in your triumph and your grandeur; but I would not have M. de Sévigné witness them: they would give him a disgust to a life of tranquillity, from whence he has been driven only by a provincial whirlwind, which will cost us five hun-

[1] The pretended passion of Madame de Sévigné's daughter-in-law for M. de Grignan, whom she had never seen, gave rise to many jests as amusing as they were innocent.

dred pistoles. By way of consolation, allow me to embrace you with all my heart; I dare not say M. de Grignan, for I have still some modesty left.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues and concludes her letter to her Daughter.*

I very much approve what my daughter-in-law has written to you. I have this moment received your letter of the eighteenth, which had been detained at Vitré, though it arrived, no doubt, with that of the sixteenth. This letter informs me of the arrival of the Chevalier, looking ill, unable to stand, and with a disordered stomach: do you know what I did in reading this letter? I wept, like you; I cannot endure the idea of his illness: I take as great an interest in him as if I were really one of his family. I hope change of air and quiet will restore him: your attentions have always been successful, and I sincerely wish they may be so again; pray tell him so. Let me know what room you have appropriated to him, that I may visit him. How I pity Pauline and Madame de Rochebonne for having been at Aubenas, while you were at Avignon! what a difference! Do not divide your acknowledgments on the victory of the Grand Council; indeed it was entirely owing to the Chevalier, and the respect that is paid to him and his friends; you were too good in allowing me the pleasure of performing a part in it. I wish the same success to M. d'Arles. I embrace my dear Comtesse with true affection.

LETTER 905

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, July 3, 1689.

It is nine months this third of July, reckoning from day to day, and from Sunday to Sunday, since I left you with a deluge of tears, and more than you perceived, at Charenton. Such partings are grievous and bitter, par-

ticularly when we have not much time to lose; but to turn them to our advantage, we ought to make them a period of abstinence and penance, which would be the sure means of making them salutary; it is certain that this holy economy is a favour from heaven, like all others, which we do not deserve to obtain. Nine months, then, have passed, in which I have neither seen nor embraced you, nor even heard the sound of your voice; I have not been ill, I have had no particular uneasiness. I have seen fine houses, fine countries, and fine cities; nevertheless, I must acknowledge, that it appears to me nine years since I left you. I have had no letter from you this post: the delay is always a disappointment to me. Madame de Lavardin tells me that she said to Madame de Buri with regard to Chabrillant's cause, which the last expects to gain, "You have always great expectations; but one of your friends, who understands these things, is not of the same opinion." "Ah!" said she, "you mean M. de Fieubet, but I do not believe him." And Madame de Lavardin afterwards told me, that M. d'Arles is to have the honour of the civil petition; it is he, then, who is to be the solicitor; but I would not, I think, solicit with beat of drum in open Court, where people are convinced you have already but too much credit. We lead here, my dear Comtesse, the life I described to you: it is very fine weather; we are so perfumed at night with jessamines and orange-flowers, that in this respect I think I am in Provence. M. and Madame de Chaulnes have written to me from St.-Malo, and constantly mention you. Write to La Troche, she cannot be consoled for your forgetfulness of her; I know not how it has happened, for you are punctual: it is not possible that I have not informed you of the death of her husband; I expect your answer.

LETTER 906

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, July 6, 1689.

I received the two delightful packets, so essential to my repose, together. Your account of the Chevalier grieves me; I never saw him troubled with such vapours, nor with so disordered a stomach. Were you not affected to see him carried into the house? You bring tears into my eyes. This has long been a subject of melancholy reflection to me. What a man! at what an age! where is he? where ought he to be? what a reputation, what a fortune, strangled, suffocated! what a loss to your son! These are great subjects for meditation, but to this we must add, it is the will of God that it should be so; there is nothing to be said to this: we must cast our eyes to the ground, and suffer; we are not the strongest. You seem to be reconciled to the word *vapours,* which you would not utter till it was explained to you. You have relaxed in favour of the correspondence, which must entirely have been destroyed if you had exploded this word; it serves to explain a thousand things that have no name; our ignorance lays hold of it as readily as of a Pam at loo. Let us then treat the Chevalier's vapours properly; say nothing to him that can vex him; let there be no altercation, no dispute: his blood is too easily agitated; it catches fire, and circulates too violently; this is the sole foundation of all his disorders.

I am extremely obliged to your good company for thinking of, and wishing for, me. I own, I often wish myself in that large handsome house, whose inhabitants I am so well acquainted with. Many compliments to the newcomer. You have made me laugh at the equipage with which he came into your ante-chamber, flying from the north wind, which seemed to pursue him. I imagine you only want this north wind to complete the building; what

a convenience! it will not fail you in time of need: no weaker persuasions can prevail. Do not forget to tell me the sequel of everything that occurs at Grignan; this is the stage that attracts my attention the most, though it be not the most important in Europe: but it is everything to me. When I figure to myself the number of guests you have at Grignan; that this is what is called living retired, to avoid other expenses; I would laugh if I could: and I say, "My daughter is carried away by a violent whirlwind, which she cannot elude, and which every where pursues her; it is her destiny:" at the same time I comprehend that God proportions your courage to your fate; and your conduct is so wonderful, that you are always in the air, and yet you fly without wings. For my part, my dear child, I fall flat on the ground; and when I have nothing, I have nothing. My affairs at Nantes are in a lamentable condition; everything is turned to chicane and seizures, which are carried on for twenty years successively. The Abbé Charrier daily offers me his services, and to come from a distance of fifty leagues, to settle my accounts, if necessary; it is enough for me to tell you how much I am obliged to him. The weather is, as I have told you, delightful; the heat is pleasant at *The Rocks*; and I assure you, that the three hours I am alone in these woods, with God, myself, you, your letters, and my book, appear to me only a moment. There is something grateful and agreeable in this solitude, this profound silence, and this liberty; there is nothing I prefer to it but yourself; this is my present situation. You say nothing of Pauline, and what the Chevalier thinks of her. Is it Madame de Simiane de Vauréas, or the President's lady, you have with you? Tell me all this in a breath, as well as the conduct and motions of M. d'Arles in the fourth Court of Inquests, without prejudice to what Rochon will tell me upon the subject. These things constitute my true *myself*. I have been charmed again to hear Martillac speak of Avignon, and of your answers to the speeches. Good heavens! my child, what are you dreaming of? You think

the King or the Province will give something to my son for maintaining and instructing the nobility? not a penny, I assure you; the honour is all.

Do not be uneasy about the letter you wrote to Mademoiselle Descartes; she admires it in secret, like a person of sense, who knows the consequences of such a confidence; I answer for it that she will never mention it to anyone but to a very worthy man, whom she calls her master, and who is as prudent as herself.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to the Chevalier* DE GRIGNAN.

(Enclosed in her letter to her Daughter.)

I have received real pleasure, Sir, notwithstanding the sorrow I felt for your ill state of health, from the sight of your hand-writing: I thank you for this courtesy; I find you better from your own account than from the accounts my daughter has given of you. I had still this resource left, as you say; the knowledge that she feels so much for the indisposition of those she loves, as not to be able to mention them but in a way calculated to convey the most melancholy ideas. I am, therefore, inclined to hope that your native air, such good society, and Balaruc, will restore your health: I assure you, there are few things in the world I wish for more. You give me real joy, by informing me of Madame de Grignan's good state of health: I rely very much on what Martillac says, but I prefer what you say. God preserve this dear woman, who is so worthy of being beloved, and grant her the fortitude necessary to support her fate, and all the evils that her affectionate heart occasions her!

LETTER 907

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, July 10, 1689.

I have received no letter from you to-day, and must therefore chat with you on anything that offers. M. de Seignelai is now at Brest; I am a little uneasy at not being able to discover the reason, for a reason there must necessarily be. I advise you to pay attention to all you learn from the Chevalier with regard to the great preparations of our enemies upon the Rhine. The Abbé Bigorre does not fear them, either for himself, who is safe, or for his friends; make yourself easy, my dear child, about the pretty little *colonel,* since you have him at your finger's end. I believe that the Chevalier, after what M. de Montégut has told him, will not dare to repeat that ridiculous expression which made us laugh, *I know a fool*: in truth, he is neither a fool nor a child; and if his manners, which we formerly thought too reserved, be now tinctured with some boldness, and he habituates himself to conversation, he has no fault; in short, *God preserve him*: this is the burden of my song. It seems, by a letter Rochon writes to me, that M. d'Arles has a great deal of business upon his hands. His opponents are his friends: Madame Talon has been the means of making her husband protract ours, at the instance of Madame de Buri; but if this delay continues much longer, M. d'Arles will complain to the King. Madame de La Faluère is another adversary; if, through her great friendship for Madame de Buri, she should change her sentiments in favour of her friend, this prelate will easily surmount all difficulties; honest Rochon entreats me to believe that everything will go right. I agree that M. Gui did not speak amiss to the Grand Council, but I nevertheless thought, without prepossession, that the simple truth appeared much stronger

in Rochon's discourse; and this is so certain, that if the Chevalier recollects, he can inform you that we were quite in despair at not having our cause tried upon the spot, before the iron was cold; this was a sign that we were then convinced that the judges were well disposed towards us, and that we were afraid they would become indifferent the next day; but God gave us the pleasure of this victory: I shall never forget it, and I wish M. d'Arles as complete a one.

We still lead the same life, and I reconcile myself better than I ever supposed I could do, to being three or four hours alone: I was so happy with you, my beloved child, and my old friends, that I had forgotten I could write prose; and I am highly pleased at finding that I succeed so well. I have begun to read a book of piety, which is better than any of my productions. It is written by a M. Hamon [1], of Port-Royal, who was a real saint, and who has drawn his work from the purest streams: it is a *Treatise on Perpetual Prayer,* joined to some other treatises. What I have read of it appears to me admirable; the preface is very suitable, and the approbation of the three doctors is a sufficient eulogium: when this book comes into your hands, pay it due respect; M. de Grignan will be highly pleased with it. I entreat the Chevalier to tell me something of Pauline; I hope he is pleased with her. How does M. de Carcassonne agree with his brother, of whom he wrote such pleasantries? what resolution has he taken with regard to his building? if he follows his own disposition, I am persuaded a third story will soon be erected. I cannot yet refrain from laughing at the equipage the Chevalier took with him to reach the old apartments of his father. The parterre belonging to yours, is now so beautiful, so well planted, so fashionable, and so

[1] Jean Hamon, a celebrated physician, and one of the best writers of Port-Royal, who died February 22, 1687. See his eulogium and epitaph in the *Necrology of Port-Royal de Champs*, page 19, and continuation. Amsterdam edition, 1723.

He was the intimate friend of Racine, who desired to be buried at his feet, in the burying-ground of Port-Royal.

full of flowers and orange-trees, and the *Place Coulanges* is so pleasant, that you would not know it again. Your poor brother is still at Rennes, to his sorrow, and his ruin. M. and Madame de Chaulnes are at St.-Malo. I should never conclude, my dear child, if I were to tell you how affectionately I am engaged with you, your letters, your regard for me, and the desire I believe you have of seeing me with you, and the consolation I have from this reflection; it sweetens the close of my life: but we must return to the will of God, which we should never forget. You gave me great pleasure the other day in telling me, that you were not inclined to be jealous; how just is this confidence, and how worthy of the perfect friendship I entertain for you! I entreat you, not to forget to pay my compliments where they are due. Your sister-in-law is so far from being tired at the accounts of Avignon, that three days ago she made me read over again, "The Procession" and "The Jews"; she is very fond of these things, and I of everything you relate. I tenderly embrace you and my dear Pauline. My taste perfectly agrees with yours, in regard to *Esther*; that was a pleasant day to me.

LETTER 908

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, July 13, 1689.

I have not received two packets at once as I expected. I am persuaded that one, of the twenty-eighth or thirtieth of June, has miscarried. I shall be sorry if it be lost, and particularly if in this packet I should have lost the answer I expected from you respecting the memorial relative to M. de M***, for it is impatiently expected at Rennes: I will answer for it, that you will not contend for any of the fine lands specified in this memorial: it appears to me that this gentleman is very rich, that he has very fine furniture, and that he is a very worthy man: his son is handsome and

well made, is he not? All this is well; if I should be hard pushed as to his family, I should, like M. de Rochefoucauld, *be obliged to swallow hot peas.* If your answer be in the packet that is lost, repeat to me, as nearly as you can, what I have to say, lest your silence should create suspicion, like *Mary-Jane of Flanders*; I imagine you have not forgotten du Bellay's story.

This rainy and windy weather makes me melancholy; it interrupts my pretty walks; but I find M. Nicole will not allow us to complain of the weather. I could not be happy, if I did not often reflect on Providence; it is the consolation of the melancholy stages of life, it shortens all complaints, softens every pain, fixes every idea; or rather, it ought to do all this; but much is wanting to our being wise enough to avail ourselves so salutarily of this view; we are still too much agitated, and too easily affected. It is my opinion, that those who never consider it, are more wretched than those who endeavour to habituate themselves to it. This kind Providence, then, is going to determine our petition, according to its pleasure; its will, in regard to the *arrêt,* gives me sufficient hopes as to the sequel; the interest I take in it is as great as my affection for you is strong; it is of the same materials: resignation, it is true, has not so complete a hold over it as it ought to have, in everything else it is not amiss: but, alas! this is a weak side.

When I take into view the whole of the long absence to which we seem condemned, I acknowledge that I tremble; but when I consider it in detail, and from day to day, I submit to it for the sake of my affairs; for my journey would avail me but little, if I did not pass the winter here: I am certain that Madame de Chaulnes will also remain here the same time, and I shall follow her destiny. You, my dear child, calculate that you can live six months out of Grignan, and six months *in retirement* at Grignan; can you call your present residence there, with all the splendour which is inseparable from it, *being in retirement*? I wish your son could pay you a visit, and I think

I also wish that the Chevalier would unite the two seasons for taking the waters, by passing a winter in Provence: am I wrong? would not returning in the autumn mar all he had been doing? should he not give up one year to the hope of a cure whilst he is there? But, my child, I talk at random, according to my confined intellects; I cannot have an ill opinion of Balaruc, after what I have heard the Capuchins say. It is true, the journey is long; that is a misfortune; but how many patients go much farther! Your account of your eldest daughter's quinsy alarms me; it is a disorder I dread more than any; you say she will not soon get over it, which makes me extremely uneasy. You have been very much heated at Avignon, you had no sleep there; this mode of life is admirably adapted to an inflammation in the throat. Take care of your balsam; it is an infallible remedy: I have told you the effect it produced on Madame de Chaulnes, it cured her instantly: never be without this precious medicine, I conjure you. Pauline's is a strange disorder, the poor child must be very pale; you must endeavour to cure her. I find amazing virtues in your waters of Vals, which are equally good for all disorders, however opposite; if experience were not in their favour, I should think them worthy of a place in Molière's comedy of the *Médecins*.

You give me a very pleasing idea of the manner in which you pass your time; what excellent company! you have even the pleasure of not being tempted to quit your beautiful terraces; this is a happiness for invalids; they cannot reproach themselves with taking you from your walks, they have the pleasure of knowing that they are no restraint upon you. How can your days seem more than moments, since they fly even in our *Thébaïde*? How goes on our Carcassonne's taciturnity? what has he at length produced? what has he pronounced? if he has listened to the north wind, he must have decided; it does not explain itself in ambiguous terms, and its voice ought to be heard above all others. I do not know the terrace which is your daily haunt; it must be in great request, as it is sheltered

from the north wind. All your views are admirable, I am acquainted with that of Mount Ventoux; I am very fond of these amphitheatres, and am persuaded, like you, that if heaven should be curious to view our spectacles, its inhabitants could not choose a better spot to see them advantageously; while, at the same time, you would enjoy the most magnificent spectacle in the world, without dispute.

My son is gone to St.-Malo, to pay a short visit to M. and Madame de Chaulnes; he is with M. de Pommereuil, and will return to Rennes. We are in hopes that this Regiment of Nobility will soon be dismissed; in case of necessity, they can be called together in the twinkling of an eye. My son desired me, the other day, to say a thousand kind things to you from him; I have done the same for you; his wife is very sorry that you should leave your fine orange-trees at Avignon to the mercy of the winds, and that you should say you did not care about them: what an expression! she begs their life at your hands, and that you will take care of them, or send them to her, and she will shelter them from the tempest. I told you that we were entirely surrounded with orange-trees, jessamines, and all sorts of flowers. I ask your pardon, my love, for such a long uninteresting conversation; my leisure is dangerous. The Chevalier will laugh at me, and not without reason.

LETTER 909

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, July 17, 1689.

I have at length received the answer concerning M***'s fortune; she is, indeed, a little too sincere. If such accounts were always given, when marriages are in question, there are many that would never take place. Debts in abundance, lands subject to taxation, mortgaged plate;

good heavens! what a situation! But what is become of all this beautiful furniture, of those immense *brasiers*, those plates, that superb sideboard, and all we saw at M***? I thought it an illusion, and I find I was not mistaken: the situation of M***'s affairs, like those of every other person's, savours strongly of the times.

It gives me pleasure to witness, in idea, my dear Comtesse, the life you lead; it makes my very woods cheerful. What excellent company! what a brilliant sun! how easy it is to sing in such society, "We hear the north wind whistle; well, let it whistle on!" You would bear more patiently than I do the continuation of our rains; but they have ceased, and I have resumed my solitary but delightful walks. What do you say, my child? would you not suffer me to have two or three hours to myself, after having been at mass, to dinner, and till five o'clock working, or talking with my daughter-in-law? she would, I believe, be as much vexed at this as myself: she is a good little woman, and we agree wonderfully well together; but we have a great taste for this liberty of parting and meeting again afterwards. When I am with you, my child, I own I never leave you but with regret and consideration for you; with every other person it is from consideration for myself. Nothing can be more just, or more natural: it is impossible to feel for two persons what I feel for you; leave us, therefore, a little to our sacred freedom; it agrees with me, and by the help of books the time passes, in this way, as quickly as it does at your brilliant Castle. I pity those who have no taste for reading: your son is yet of this number; but I hope, with you, that when he discovers the fatal effects of ignorance, particularly to a soldier, who has so much to read of the glorious actions of others, he will be inclined to form an acquaintance with them, and remove this defect. I am also of opinion, that by reading, we learn to write; I know some officers of rank, whose style is vulgar; it is, however, a delightful thing to be able to communicate our thoughts; but it also often happens that these people write as they

think, and as they speak; everything is in unison. I believe the Marquis will write well; I have long wished he would pay you a visit in November, and, as he will then be eighteen years of age, you should think of marrying him immediately, and when he has provided himself with heirs, let him return; but do not trouble yourself about Mademoiselle d'Or****; her father is a fool, whose ill manners and ill will put me in a passion.

I cannot help thinking that the air and mode of life at Grignan, must restore the Chevalier's health; he is surrounded with the best society he can wish for, without being interrupted by those cruel visits, those *swarms of caterpillars,* which gave him the gout; no cold, but a north wind that may be called his native air, that he may not be frightened at it; in short, I do not comprehend the obstinacy and gloominess of his vapours, in keeping their ground against so many good things; it is, however, but too true, that he is tormented with them. I am delighted that Pauline pleases him; I am sure she would please me too: there is a sweet complacency in her countenance and her pretty eyes; ah, little sparklers! methinks I see them now. And as to her petulance, I will engage that it is corrected; nothing more is necessary to effect this, than your kindness to her, and her desire of pleasing you: but to expect this dear child to be perfect at her leaving Aubenas is quite ridiculous; I embrace her tenderly.

I weep to think that M. de Carcassonne should sit again with his arms folded. Ah, my dear good Lord, one little effort more! do not cross them so soon, complete your work: look at that of M. d'Arles, see how high, how great, how perfect, it is; would you yield this honour to him, and leave this part of the magnificent seat of your illustrious forefathers imperfect, in ruins, exposed to the north wind, uninhabitable, and so inconvenient to your elder brother, as to deprive him of the means of affording a stranger, or even his servants, a lodging? am I not right? Ah! my dear Lord, take courage, do not leave this speck upon your reputation, nor this advantage to M. d'Arles,

who, notwithstanding his little debts, was determined to crown the undertaking. If M. de La Garde would support and assist me, in bringing this matter to bear, I think I should lose no reputation in the business: but I know not how I am with the prelate, and therefore am silent. You give me real pleasure in telling me I am sometimes wished for by the Grignans; will not the eldest, who writes so well, say a word to his little sister-in-law?

*LETTER 910

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

The Rocks, July 17, 1689.

We have here a large body of the nobility of several Provinces. I have already told you, my dear cousin, that my son, to his great regret, has been chosen by this whole canton, to have the command. As this unwished-for circumstance is a sort of honour to the individual, he could not refuse it. He is, therefore, at Rennes, keeping an immense table, with which he could very well dispense, since the sum it will cost him will lead to nothing further. M. de Seignelai is at Brest, to expedite our armament, which will be ready in four or five days. I am persuaded that the nobility will be dismissed when M. de Tourville has a fleet: we shall then have the means of making these pretended masters of the sea lower their flag.

I am here in perfect solitude; I may perhaps take a trip to Rennes to see the Duchesse de Chaulnes, with whom I came into this country, and with whom I shall return. If I could have our dear Corbinelli here, I should not be to be pitied; you know the taste I have for his mind, and his worth; you have the same for him; and, as the rest of his friends equally admire him, they detain him at Paris. My dear cousin, and my dear niece, adieu; there is no happiness I do not wish to you both.

LETTER 911

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Rennes, Wednesday, July 20, 1689.

This date surprises you, my dear child, as well as myself; for I did not expect to sally forth so soon from *The Rocks,* where I found myself very comfortable. It is true, that this excursion is only for a few days; but M. and Madame de Chaulnes have entreated me so earnestly and so cordially to pay them a visit here, where they are come to see my son at the head of the nobility, and the Colonel's lady being also invited, as you may suppose, we set out the next day, which was yesterday, and found my son here. I am excellently accommodated at the Marquise de Marbeuf's; we expect the good Governors here to-night, and to-morrow I shall finish my letter, and tell you some news from Brest. I must now speak to you of the fine painting in the style of *Albane,* which you give me of this little Rochebonne; for it is precisely so: I can fancy I see him, and I thank Madame de Rochebonne for having obliged you to give me this portrait; it is a charming one, and has refreshed my imagination; he seems to be a sample of the three boys at Paris. In short, these are charming productions; when one or two are cast in this mould, it would be a consolation for having a dozen; if it were a girl, *she would set the world on fire,* as Tréville says, in speaking of your beauty. But this boy has really too much wit; all his little thoughts and arguments, his finesse, his juvenile rhetoric, are quite out of the common road; I should not have been at all surprised, if, after having scolded him, you had loved him so much, as to have been almost ready to devour him; for what else can we do with such a little angel?

But let us speak of that *wisdom* [1] which appears to me perfect folly, perfect madness: it has its source in a silent phrensy; a mad dog does not always appear mad, though he is so; my dear child, this is just the case with him: who would not think that everything was calm within? who would not think that he was delighted to follow his first ideas, and that they were daily strengthened by merit, and even by the sequel of what might happen? what a prospect! what a consolation, to *bequeath his estate thus*! I ask pardon of modesty, but there are two lines of *Polyeuctes* that I cannot suppress:

> Aux mains du plus vaillant et du plus honnête homme,
> Qu'ait adoré la terre, et qu'ait vu naître Rome [2].

What a pleasure it must be to have such an heir, or such heirs! [3] by what right, and from what a family, does he cast away what he received from them? In short, my child, I am lost; what is wisdom? what is friendship? have we ever seen them under such figures? It is said that he is attached to his house, I do not believe it; that he is attached to the Chevalier, I do not believe it, unless, as you say, he loves the Chevalier as he loves his house, *not at all*; but what then does he love? this is such a monstrous thought, that I am a thousand leagues from conceiving it: let me know the sequel; will it not vanish, like the marriage [4]? For my part, I do not believe there is any man bold enough

[1] M. de La Garde.

[2] Corneille's *Poly.* Act IV. *Scene iv.* To the hands of the most valiant and worthy man that the earth ever adored, or that Rome ever beheld. [Translation.]

[3] Madame de Sévigné here means the Chevalier de Grignan, and all the Grignans. The estate of La Garde devolved from Louis-Adhémar de Monteil, Baron de Grignan. See Father Anselme, vol. vii., page 930, edition of 1733.

[4] We have already seen that the marriage of M. de La Garde (*Antoine-Escalin des Aimars*) did not take place. Madame de Sévigné hopes that the sale of the Marquisate de La Garde will prove the same, which was the case. This estate at present belongs to Mademoiselle de Castellane, grand-daughter of Pauline de Grignan, Marquise de Simiane, sole legatee of M. de La Garde (her uncle according to the custom in Brittany), who died in 1713.

to purchase this estate: but I shall never have done. I shall only say two words more respecting the dispute between you. It seems to me that you are with a dozen Comtesses de Fiesque; you know they never considered small estates, where nothing grew but corn, as of any consequence, and they thought they had done a charming thing in exchanging it quickly for silver looking-glasses and other baubles. Such is your disposition, Messieurs de la *Balustrade*: this comparison is decisive, and I shall not exhaust my simple and right reason, to convince you that gold is more valuable than quicksilver, and that Madame Sarson, who is a good farmer, is more solid than a butterfly. I cannot leave my letter at a better period. I am going to visit the good Chaulneses.

M. de Pommereuil is just gone from hence: he has given me so much information with regard to the affairs of Brest, that, though you may know as much as I do, I cannot forbear repeating to you what he has told me. Maréchal d'Estrées was on board his ship, all his orders were given, and everything was embarked, when he received a command from the King to return to Brest, and to remain there, on account of the importance of the place, and the necessity of his presence. M. de Seignelai is embarked: he is intrusted with the execution of this grand affair. Château-Regnault [1] is with him; they expect the Chevalier de Tourville [2], who is to join them, and whose fleet will compose the sixty sail which constitute our force; but there are upwards of sixty ships, Dutch and English, in an island named Ushant, eight leagues from Belle-Isle, which will prevent this junction: you judge very rightly, my dear child, of the importance of this affair. M. de Seignelai appears to me like a young and happy Bacchus, who is going to conquer the Indies. It is said the Pope is very much indisposed. M. de Lavardin is arrived at Paris,

[1] François-Louis Rousselet, Comte de Château-Regnault, since Vice-Admiral and Maréchal of France.

[2] Anne-Hilarion du Cotentin, Chevalier (and afterwards Comte) de Tourville, Vice-Admiral and Maréchal of France.

he is afraid to return; and I have fears too, but of a different nature[1]. We should be prepared for all events; God gives and takes away at his own good pleasure.

Thursday.

These good Governors received me with open arms; we supped yesterday at M. de Pommereuil's with some women, Revel and others; we are to dine there again today, according to the regulation of the King's Commissary; Madame de Chaulnes calls this an *arrêt* of the higher Council. She has spoken to me of you, and says you do not like me to be at *The Rocks*; you may believe, however, that, except in winter, nothing is so pleasant to me, or so good for my health; I am here quite unhinged with noise and company. I was glad to visit the Chaulneses for a few days; and I shall always come with pleasure, but nothing can support me except the hope of returning to my tranquil scenes. This bustle can never please me; none, in fact, pleases me but that of the Carnavalet Mansion, or the Castle of Grignan, if I am ever happy enough to hear it; for I own that I passionately wished for the latter. This Duchesse says a great many kind things to you. M. de Chaulnes has said a thousand laughable ones to me, and such as they are, good or bad, pray answer them: you love me too much, not to assist me in paying those who have so much friendship for me. M. de Chaulnes has really much at heart what he mentions to you; a journey to Rome, to Grignan, to the King of Spain. I was so warm I did not hear half what he said. He will not dismiss the nobility so soon as was expected; he has received orders to let them still remain on foot, without being of any utility; I saw them yesterday formed into squadrons, they make a very good appearance. My son is much harassed with them: he has not time to write to you; he returns you a thousand acknowledgments for your remembrance of him. I never lose sight of my dear Comtesse, her Castle,

[1] We know why Madame de Sévigné was apprehensive of the restitution of the County of Venaissin.

or its inhabitants; present my compliments to them all, according to the friendship they entertain for me; you know how to vary the phraseology; but I conjure you to embrace my dear Pauline. I often obtain these little favours for her; love her upon my recommendation. I am yours more than my own, my dear child; this is a compliment without exaggeration, and so would be all I could say of my affection for you: you make me too learned upon this subject to believe that certain people love others, when I discover effects that nearly resemble hatred.

I have spoken in confidence to Madame de Marbeuf relative to this memorial, and she thinks the measure a good one: she is right.

LETTER 912

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Rennes, Sunday, July 24, 1689.

It was said here that the Pope was dead, and that M. de Lavardin was only changing his linen, and was to return again: but the Abbé Bigorre will not give credit to this report, and positively asserts that he is not dead. This fortunate County is the gift and bounty of Providence to you, and calls forth all my gratitude. You make a very good use of it, but you are at length turned economist, and you will find your advantage in it. I give proper orders respecting my affairs at Nantes, they take their own way; I shall set the Abbé Charrier to work at a proper time; the chief thing is, I spend but little, and I send small bills of exchange to Paris, which are immediately devoured. If I remain a little while in this country, I shall be able to breathe, which is more than I did before. I should be very sorry, my dear child, to be capable of doing what I do for the sake of hoarding money; I should dread avarice, which is my aversion; but I am very free from this vile passion; I have more reason to think that

I am a true votary to the love of justice; so I pursue my track, without fear or shame, in the way of righteous economy, which meets with your approbation; it has not left me room to doubt whether it is my spring of action—I have been but too short a time in a country where I spend nothing.

I cannot tell you with what joy and friendship these good Governors received me, and what gratitude they expressed at my coming from *The Rocks* to visit them. M. de Chaulnes has reviewed the nobility; it is a fine regiment, and tolerably well disciplined. My son received the compliments upon this occasion in a manner that gave me pleasure; whilst I could not help reflecting that I had not educated and launched him into life and fortune for that station. But then Providence immediately occurred to me, for without this there would be no end of retrospect; it would be a skein we could never unravel: here it is we meet with fortitude; God preserve me from anything that may overthrow this salutary philosophy. By the bye, I received a visit the other day from three pretty women, grand-nieces of M. Descartes: their aunt had not said a word to them respecting your letter, which may serve to convince you of her discretion. They told me a thousand things they had heard of their uncle, which will amuse you; but I reserve them for *The Rocks*. There is a M. de Ganges here, who adores M. de Grignan, so that he must be my friend; his regiment is in this country; I really wish you could know in what estimation a man of Languedoc, who knows all the Grignans, and who is the Comte's particular friend, is held here.

The son of the Seneschal of Rennes, who was so wild, and has had so many adventures, danced to us the other day: he is a perfect model for a sculptor, twenty years of age, and has married the daughter of the President *à mortier* of this country very precipitately, because the first thing she did after seeing him was to become pregnant; so she was married, and brought to bed six weeks after. She is here, and believes that when her husband is seen she can-

not be blamed; it is true that when he is dancing, it is impossible not to be of his wife's opinion. Figure to yourself the finest person in the world, a countenance suited to the hero of a romance, dancing in the most noble style, like Pécour, Favier, or St. André [1], all these masters having told him, "Sir, we can teach you nothing, you know more than we do." He danced the beautiful *chaconnes*, which the Spaniards are so fond of; but particularly the *passe-pieds* with his wife, in such perfection, as no words can describe: no formal steps, nothing but just cadences, with fancied attitudes, some masterly flourishes, and then the simple minuet-step, sometimes slow, and then with his feet scarcely touching the ground: I assure you, my child, that you, who are a judge of such things, would have been highly pleased with the harmony of these dances. Madame de Chaulnes, who was a fine dancer in her time, was quite in raptures herself, and said she had never seen anything like it. A man of very good sense sat next to me, and we both said all we could to justify the girl, and in applauding her husband's style of dancing.

Did you, my dear child, understand the cause of Maréchal d'Estrées's disgust, who had reached Conquêt [2]? M. de Seignelai has succeeded him, and the Maréchal has returned to Brest. There are sixty-eight of the enemy's ships at Ushant. We expect the Chevalier de Tourville, who is to join M. de Seignelai, and then our fleet will consist of sixty-eight ships. It is thought that the wind which brings in the ships from the Levant, will be unfavourable to those at Ushant: thus we always wish success to him whom we serve. M. and Madame de Chaulnes desire to be remembered to you in the most friendly manner. I sometimes fancy myself with you at Avignon; two immense tables twice a day, and a *basset-table*, that cannot be dispensed with. The country is somewhat different. Madame de Chaulnes has been at Avignon, and she was

[1] Three of the most celebrated opera-dancers of that time.

[2] A small maritime town in Brittany, five leagues from Brest, with a good port and a good road.

as fond of it as you are; she was very unwilling to leave it, having been received there as an Ambassadress: she enters into all the charms of this residence; God preserve it for you.

We shall all separate in three or four days; this ought to give you pleasure, for the life that is led here annoys me: they make too much of me; I cannot be alone; this is death to me. All Madame de Chaulnes's visitors come here; I have not a moment to myself, which provokes me: do not desire them to make me leave my solitude; I should be ill if I were long to continue this mode of life. *The Rocks* is peaceable, and calculated to preserve your dear mother to you, that she may see you again; here we are overwhelmed. The Regiment of Nobility is still assembled; so that my son cannot return with us. I could not help thinking with Baptiste, in an air he made for the opera, and which was sung at mass, when I saw him look so handsome at the head of the troops, "My Lord, I ask pardon, I did not make him for you—gentlemen of the *arrière-ban,* I did not make him for you." You have said nothing to me of the Chevalier's health: it was he who told me this little story of Baptiste. Adieu, my child; you know how much I love you. What a simple and common expression, to explain what is so rare and so uncommon!

LETTER 913

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Rennes, Monday, July 25, 1689.

I shall set out to-morrow at day-break with M. and Madame de Chaulnes, to make a tour for a fortnight; this is the way in which it happened: M. de Chaulnes said to me the other day, "Madame, you should go with us to Vannes, to see the first President; he has paid you great attentions, ever since you have been in the Province; it is a sort of duty in a woman of quality." I did not under-

stand him: "Sir," said I, "I long to return to *The Rocks*, to be in a state of quiet, which is absolutely necessary after leaving this place, and which you alone could have induced me to quit." Here it rested. The next day Madame de Chaulnes said to me in a low voice at table; "My dear *gouvernante*, you must go with us, it is but one stage between this place and Vannes; we sometimes stand in need of the Parliament. We shall afterwards go to Auray, which is only three leagues from thence; we shall not be troubled with company, and we shall return in a fortnight." I answered somewhat too carelessly, "Madame, you have no occasion for me, it is only your kindness that makes you wish for my company. I know of nothing that obliges me to keep in with these gentlemen; I will retire to my solitude, which is really necessary to me." Madame de Chaulnes drew back somewhat coolly; I immediately asked myself, "Why should I refuse people to whom I am indebted for every proof of friendship and attention to me? I make use of their carriage and of themselves when it is convenient to me; and I refuse to go with them a little journey, in which perhaps they would be glad of my company: they might select whom they pleased, they ask this favour with timidity and politeness; and I, though in perfect health, and without any substantial reason, refuse them, at the very time we are desirous of having the deputation for my son, of which M. de Chaulnes will probably have the disposal this year." All this produced a speedy revolution in my mind, I found I was not doing right. After I had thus reproached myself, I said to her, "Madame, my first thoughts only regarded myself, I had but very little inclination to see M. de La Faluère [1]; but is it possible that you can wish it for yourself, and that my company could give you the least pleasure?" She blushed, and said to me with an air of truth, "You may judge." "This, Madame," said I, "is enough, there needs no more, I will go with you." She showed me that she was highly pleased, embraced me, and

[1] First President of the Parliament of Brittany.

left the table, saying to M. de Chaulnes, "She will go with us." "She refused me," said M. de Chaulnes, "but I was in hopes she would not refuse you." In short, my dear child, I am going, and I am convinced that I act right, and agreeably to the gratitude I owe them for their continual friendship, and to sound policy; you yourself would have advised me to it. My son is delighted, and thanks me for having changed my mind: here he comes.

Monsieur DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to his Sister.*
(Enclosed in his Mother's letter.)

Nothing is so true, my beautiful little sister. Madame de Chaulnes was hurt at my mother's refusal; she was silent, coloured, and leaned upon her hand; and when my mother had made her reflections, and said she was ready to go if it were agreeable to her, she expressed such unfeigned joy, as would have affected you. I did not know what had passed, but I was informed of it a short time after; and independently of the idea of what they may do for me, if they have the power, it was impossible to fail in this little courtesy, without at the same time failing in all the duties of friendship and propriety; so I beg you will thank them heartily, as I have done. Madame de Chaulnes is so careful of her health, that we may be perfectly easy.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues and concludes her letter to her Daughter.*

I have just received your letter of the sixteenth; it is too kind, too charming, and too obliging. I laughed, alone, at the embarrassment of your masons and workmen. I very much like the liberty, and even libertinism, of your life and repasts, and am pleased that the stroke of a hammer should not be your master. Good heavens, how happy should I be to lead for a while such a life in such company! nothing, however, can deprive me of the hope of being with you some day. As this step depends upon

God, I implore him to permit it, and hope he will hear my prayers. I never could have supposed that butter could have been included in your luxuries; I thought this could only have been the case in Brittany. But I shall never forget the reason why you eat as much as they please, "that you are not hungry." *I shall eat as much as they please, for I am no longer hungry*; I thank you for this phrase. I can assure you that I am quite tired of great entertainments; *I would eat as much as they pleased, if there were nothing to eat.* This is the phrase I return you. Alas! I am very distant from the melancholy and solitude of the dusk; I long to enjoy it again; I do nothing but from motives of reason and policy. This is an invention for passing my time with a degree of languor that will prolong my life; it is the will of God; I will be as careful of my health as I can; I am delighted that yours is so good, and at the improvement of the Chevalier's. My dear child, I embrace you, and bid you adieu. We were not yet at a sufficient distance from each other. Find Auray on the map.

LETTER 914

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Auray, Saturday, July 30, 1689.

See where I am, my beloved child; behold me on the southern coast, on the borders of the sea. What is become of the time when we were in that little boudoir at Paris, two steps only from each other? It is to be hoped that we shall meet there again. In the meanwhile, Providence has thrown me here. I wrote to you on Monday from Rennes all I thought respecting this journey; we set out on Tuesday. Nothing can equal the care and friendship of Madame de Chaulnes; her principal attention is, that everything should be comfortable to me; she comes herself to see how I am accommodated. And as to M. de Chaulnes, he often sits next me at table, and I hear him

say in a half-whisper, "No, Madame, it will do her no harm; see how well she is: this is an excellent melon, do not suppose Brittany cannot boast such; she must eat a small slice." And then, when I ask him what he is muttering, he says he is only talking to you, having you always at his elbow, as a monitor to take care of my health. This whim of his is not yet exhausted, and has made us laugh more than once. We were three days coming from Rennes to Vannes, which is about seven leagues a day; this is an easy and agreeable mode of travelling, as we constantly find good dinners and suppers ready for us, the Corporations assembled, and receive all the compliments, and occasion all the bustle, attendant on *your graces*, besides troops, officers, and reviews, which make a charming war-like appearance. The regiment of Kerman is a very fine one; they are all natives of Lower Brittany, tall, and better made than the rest, but do not understand a syllable of French, except the word of command; when they perform their exercise, which they do with as much grace is if they were dancing *passe-pieds*, it is a pleasure to see them. I believe Bertrand du Guesclin meant such as these, when he said he was invincible at the head of his Bretons. M. and Madame de Chaulnes, M. de Revel, and myself, are in one carriage; sometimes I make Revel exhaust all Savoie, which affords him a wide field for animadversion; at another La R****, whose follies and violence are inconceivable; then comes the passage of the Rhine; this we call winding up, sometimes one end of the skein, sometimes the other. We arrived on Thursday night at Vannes; we were lodged at the Bishop's, M. d'Argouges's son; this is one of the handsomest, pleasantest, and best-furnished houses possible; supper was served up with so much magnificence, as to make one die almost with hunger. I said to Revel, I am famished; they helped me to a young partridge, I would rather have had some veal; to a turtle-dove, I would rather have had the wing of one of those fine chickens from Rennes. In short, I do not retract; if you say, "I will eat as much as they please, be-

cause I am not hungry;" I say, "I should have the best appetite in the world, if there were nothing upon the table;" we must, however, reconcile ourselves to this fatiguing ceremony.

M. de La Faluère was civil beyond expression; he looked at me earnestly, and never spoke but in a tone of exclamation: "What! is this Madame de Sévigné? is it she herself?" Yesterday he gave us a dinner of fish, so that we have seen all that the earth and sea can produce; this is the land of festivity. I chatted freely with this first President; he told me very ingenuously, that he disapproved the civil petition; for, having been informed by M. Ferrand, his brother-in-law, how unanimously the affair was decided, he was convinced that reason and justice were on your side. I told him a word or two about our battle in the Grand Council; he admired our good fortune, and abhorred the chicanery that had been employed: I mentioned to him Madame de Buri's conduct, with regard to the endorsement of *false* on what she knew to be true, the money that this chicanery had cost, the complaint she had made that her suit had been stifled after twenty-two vacations, the delicacy of her conscience, and her obstinacy in opposition to the advice of her best friends. M. de La Faluère listened to me with attention, and without being tired; I can answer for this: his wife is at Paris. We afterwards dined, the wine of St. Laurence sparkled, and your health was drank in a low voice by M. and Madame de Chaulnes, the Bishop of Vannes, and me, as well as M. de Grignan's the Governor of this admirable nectar; in short, my love, you are talked of from one end of the world to the other. We saw a very pretty girl, who would do honour to Versailles, but she is to marry M. de *Querignisignidi*, a near neighbour to Conquêt [1], and very distant from Trianon. M. de Revel is set out this morning to visit Brest, which is now the gayest place that can be seen. He will find M. de Seignelai on board his ship,

[1] Conquêt is situated at the extremity of Brittany, in a place called the World's End, *ad fines terræ*. It is a sea-port.

Maréchal d'Estrées upon the *pavé des vaches*[1] *at Brest*; he will admire one of the finest naval armaments possible; will share the impatience with which the Chevalier de Tourville is expected; will learn the exact number of the enemy's ships at the island of Ushant; and will return in four days, having gratified his curiosity, to impart all he has learned; this will be winding up the clue.

Madame de Chaulnes is just gone out; she intends to write to you. Besides the pleasure I give her, she has that of believing, that she communicates a very sensible one to you, in taking me away from *The Rocks*, which you represented to her very different from what they are; for the air, which you would believe bad, is, in fact, very good; it is a spot I am partial to, the walks are charming, and the mode of living there agrees with me, and pleases me. It is true, I was somewhat indisposed there; but I should have been worse in any other place. The Duchesse constantly tells me that the beautiful Comtesse will be delighted to find that she has taken me from the bad air of *The Rocks*; this, being once said, is established. In short, my dear child, you have been the cause of my making this campaign; it is also the will of Providence. I accommodate myself to it, because I am of an easy disposition, and love and ought to love M. and Madame de Chaulnes; but when it shall please God to let me return to *The Rocks*, which you so unjustly decry, I assure you, I shall be perfectly satisfied.

Please tell me whether, in Provence, the Parliament pays the same respect to the Lieutenant-General, as to the Governor; and whether the two Presidents and six Counsellors are deputed to meet M. de Grignan, a league from Aix, when he arrives there[2]. Here the first President waits upon the Governor on his arrival, with another President, and six Counsellors; and the Governor returns the visit. It is impossible to be received with more polite-

[1] *Pavé des vaches,* the cows' pavement. [Translation.]

[2] This ceremony is observed only once, that is to say, when the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor comes to be received in that quality. Nearly the same order is afterwards observed as in Brittany.

ness than I am everywhere; I everywhere find nephews of *your father* Descartes. I have just received your letter of the nineteenth. It is a pleasant thing to be with these Governors: they send their guards, and have their letters sooner than others. I am delighted at receiving yours; it is excellent, being full of the remembrance and writing of all the Grignans, whom I love and honour, as you know.

LETTER 915

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Auray, Tuesday, August 2, 1689.

Whilst waiting for your letter, I always begin to chat with you. M. de Chaulnes greatly repents of having mentioned to you a journey to Rome, and of making peace with the Pope; he did not know what you derived from this quarrel with the Holy See: he is charmed with, and enters into, all your opinions, and now repeats no other orison than yours, *God preserve the Pope.* He says you are his good *genius,* that he is continually talking to you, and that he hears you. The other day he said to me: "Why do you put your hand to your head, mother? does it ache?" I heard him, and replied, "No, daughter, not at all." This is a sort of game to us, and constantly reminds us of your love for me. I am of opinion, my dear child, that in jesting with the Duc upon this *genius,* which is always conversing with him, you might ask him if it has not said a word to him respecting your brother's deputation, which you wish and hope for; because this is precisely the year that he can do him a kindness: you will give a better turn to this, my dear child, than I can, and I am persuaded that your solicitation will produce great effect. To tell you the truth, it is his right: if he is the master, and this the Festival of the Nobility of Brittany, as it appears to be, and not of a courtier, it falls directly upon my son.

Nothing can equal the care these good Governors

take of my health, nor the marks of esteem and distinction I receive from them, which sometimes embarrass me. The happy arrival of the Chevalier de Tourville at Brest, will make us return straight to *The Rocks*; I own to you that I ardently wish it, and that, if my health were not proof, it would be shaken by this sort of agitation. After having been terrified at the solitude of *The Rocks*, and been the cause of tearing me from them, you should be the means of replacing me there, to pass the remainder of the summer, which is the beautiful season for these woods, and where, according to all appearances, I shall never pass another. All this should be said in jest; but dwell more particularly upon your gratitude for their attention to me: I admire your governing me at the distance of two hundred leagues.—Let us leave Brittany and talk of the Grignans, of the brothers who always return to their form; what astonished me was, that Carcassonne should have left it; this anger was childish, and made him say things that our Marquis would not have uttered: the Chevalier listened to them, and read them too with much pleasantry. This then may be called (how do you express it, my dear child?) *effervescences* of humour; this is a word I never met with before, but it comes from your father Descartes, and I honour him on your account. We meet some of his nephews and nieces here every moment: they are all very civil and very amiable.

This humour, then, is not very tenacious; it allows reason to come into play; and the same heart that could treat his own brother like a foe, disposes him now to take him to Balaruc, at an expense that would raise the floor wanting to his building; but he is in good humour. May he remain so, may he love and esteem him, and, above all, may he follow his advice, this is the *tu autem*: I will believe that the heart is returned, and reason along with it; everything will go on better; otherwise I laugh at these moments of friendship, which give no credit to those we love. I was delighted at M. de Carcassonne's remembrance of me, I never doubted that a little reflection would

restore me to his good opinion; it will be quite another thing when we meet.

As to M. de Grignan, I defy him not to love me, and his dear wife also; all the things which occupy his mind, create in me no apprehensions; and as it still is in our power, as he acknowledges through my daughter-in-law, and as he loves my son as if he did him no injury, I assure him also, that I love him as if he loved me very much; and that I long as much to go some day to Grignan, as if he passionately longed to see me there. What says he of his master's good fortune, that grand affair which attracted the attention of all Europe? The twenty-two ships of the Chevalier de Tourville, which were to be attacked in coming to join our fleet, entered Brest, Saturday the thirtieth of July, at four o'clock in the afternoon, without having seen a single Dutch ship: the great armament which was to have prevented this junction, and which was at an island very near Belle-Isle, disappeared, and no one knows what is become of it; I think, for my part, that it has formed itself into one of those dark clouds which we frequently see in the heavens.

I am very uneasy about M. de Grignan's journey; what a shell thrown into the midst of you all and your tranquillity! I pity him, on account of the heat; it is travelling in the sun; when I reflect on the inconveniences we have experienced in this cold country, compared with yours, I sweat at the thought of the Golden Islands [1]. In truth, the King deserves all that is done for him, but it must also be owned, that he is very well served; this is the idea we should have of serving God, or rather this is the way in which we ought to serve him. I shall not be at rest till you inform me of M. de Grignan's safe return. Alas! you say truly, that Providence, of which we talk so well, avails us little in things which we have sensibly at heart; we are to blame, and our weakness is but too apparent upon every occasion.

[1] These islands are situated upon the coast of Provence, and are commonly known by the appellation of the Islands of Hyères.

Madame de La Fayette informs me, she has written to you, to enquire after your health, the Chevalier's, and Pauline's; her son is very well at Brest. There has been a foolish affair in the army of Maréchal d'Humières, in which Nogaret has been dangerously wounded[1]. If he dies, I should like to renew the ancient alliance on that side, by a marriage between the Marquis and the pretty heiress. M. d'Arles is at Forges; I believe, with you, that he has been wholly occupied in your affairs; but can he tell us so without laughing?

You did not say a word to me in your last, respecting the Chevalier; I thought he would drink the waters in the autumn and spring, and pass the winter in your mild climate; but if he does not, I shall still think he is right. For my part, I know not whether a desire of seeing you this winter at Paris, would have made me surmount impossibilities; but I can assure you, that these would have been precisely what I should have had to encounter; no money to be obtained but by sword in hand, trifling creditors who still strangle me, coach horses to purchase; so that I know not what I could have done to have avoided ever after the inconveniences arising from this derangement: whereas, by following your example, and passing the winter in this country, like you in Provence, I shall have time to breathe; I consider this regimen as good for you as for me. The post is going; no courier is yet arrived from Brest, but the news is confirmed by persons from thence; you will hear it from Paris.

[1] Maréchal d'Humières, more of a courtier than a General, and more confident than skillful, wished to carry by storm a small castle in Flanders, called Valcourt, and was repulsed with considerable loss. Louvois, who began to fear him, took advantage of the circumstance to get him recalled; but he was the dupe of his own malice. The King sent Maréchal de Luxembourg, whom he hated and feared much more. Maréchal d'Humières is also known as the first who introduced luxury into the camp. Gourville was astonished in 1654, to see his table in the army spread with plate, and even as many dishes and as fine a desert as at Paris.

LETTER 916

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Auray, Saturday, August 6, 1689.

Everything sparkles with joy in this Province upon the arrival of the Chevalier de Tourville at Brest: M. de Revel has witnessed this very happy moment. Tourville's squadron was so little expected, that it was thought to be the enemy's; and when he made himself known, it afforded universal and agreeable surprise. He formed his plan with great judgment and courage; he supposed that the wind which would bring him to Brest, would oblige the ships at Ushant to quit their station, as it would otherwise drive them upon the island. This was so true, that they came out to gain the open sea behind, where they were so far from being able to incommode us, that the Chevalier de Tourville passed by the same place which they had been obliged to leave, and knew not what was become of them; he came full sail into Brest harbour, where he has received a thousand encomiums for having judged and profited so well by the wind. M. de Seignelai is on board his ship, living in great style; the Comte d'Estrées is his friend, and frequently sends him provisions; but the Maréchal seldom sees him, being on shore, receiving the second visits, and keeping a table that is seldom filled; there is nothing to be said upon so strange a situation [1]. The regiments of La Fère and d'Antin have orders to march into Normandy; Kerman's, and two others of this Province, are going to Brest; and two regiments of dragoons will re-

[1] The *Mémoires de La Fayette* contain curious details on the displeasure the arrival of Seignelai gave to Maréchal d'Estrées. Besides the favour of Madame de Maintenon, this Minister entertained for him as much hatred as she bore to Louvois. At length, Lauzun believed it to be his interest to take away from the latter the management of King James's affairs, and he effected it by the intervention of the Queen of England. This, with the choice of Maréchal de Luxembourg, proves that Louis XIV. was already dissatisfied with Louvois.

turn into Poitou. The noblesse are to be disbanded; so that things wear a more peaceable appearance. We shall go for a day to Port-Louis, and then to Vannes, because the first President is desirous of seeing M. de Chaulnes in Parliament; from thence we shall return to Rennes, about the twentieth or twenty-second, and then to the tranquil *Rocks*. This is our plan, my dear child; I am glad that I have given this proof of friendship and complaisance to the Governors; it was what I owed them, and they have repaid me two-fold. M. and Madame de Soubise are gone to meet their son [1], who, it is said, must have a leg amputated; you know upon what a foolish occasion. Nothing yet transpires respecting the camp of Boufflers; I think of nothing else. *God preserve our dear child*; our success at Brest makes us judge favourably of all the rest. Adieu, my dear Comtesse; I embrace you affectionately. You drink coffee and chocolate in a burning climate, in the heat of the dog-days: be careful of yourself and of me; for, indeed, at such a distance, we should avoid uneasiness, and preserve ourselves for each other.

LETTER 917

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Auray, Tuesday, August 9, 1689.

We can easily believe, that the heat M. de Grignan endures, must be intense, since it is extremely hot here, though we are so near the sea. In good earnest, these are none of the dog-days of Livry, which we thought so ridiculous; these are without rain; we are in a state of dissolution all day long, and we think this excellent for our health. We go to-morrow to Port-Louis. I shall give your letter to M. de Chaulnes, but not before to-morrow, for to-day he is quite overwhelmed. The whimsical idea

[1] Louis, Prince de Rohan, was wounded on the 9th of July, in the same affair as M. de Nogaret.

of the *genius* which prompts him to take care of my health, makes us laugh still; your solicitude and attention to the preservation of my person, have made such an impression on him, that the recollection of it gives us pleasure, and keeps up a continual correspondence with you. He says, when I eat prudently, that he is divided between the pleasure of being convinced of my health, and the pain of your having nothing to say to him; a ragoût, a salad in which there is cucumber, nuts, and such things, keep up a connection with you, which, however superficial, is very agreeable to him. He consults you with regard to Port-Louis. He thought the other day that you wanted him to return to Rennes; I gave him leave from you to be absent till the eighteenth. In short, all this raillery is not yet exhausted nor become insipid.

You are acquainted with all our success at Brest, and that we have only three regiments of Bretons to countenance Maréchal d'Estrées there. The care people wish him to take of this place when our fleet has set sail, resembles *Trivelin's* scrap of paper, which contained a hundred pistoles. The wonder of this affair, is the silence and prudence of Madame d'Estrées [1]. The King himself is so much surprised at it, that he has complimented her upon the subject, and praised her in such a manner as to oblige her to persevere in her conduct. M. de Seignelai enjoyed himself highly at Brest, whilst Revel was there; he loves the Comte d'Estrées [2], and says that the Comte was very willing to be his friend, but that the Maréchal rejected his friendship. No orders are yet received for the sailing of the fleet; we hear that the siege of Mayence is raised; we expect prosperity on every side. An epigram of four lines has been made upon the Pope, which ends in wishing for his relics: you know what I wish him.

The son of M. de Soubise, and Nogaret, are recovered of their wounds; you know all this, my love, and may

[1] Marie-Marguerite Morin, wife of Maréchal d'Estrées.

[2] Victor-Marie Comte d'Estrées, afterwards Vice-Admiral and Maréchal of France, as was then Jean Comte d'Estrées, his father.

God equally preserve our dear child. I shall make your compliments to Madame de Lavardin; but a word from yourself to the good woman would be very seasonable. She was afraid she should lose her daughter-in-law, who was given over, and also her grandson and grand-daughter, who were all afflicted with the measles in a dreadful degree. I am satisfied with the memorial respecting M****'s property; I would not have had you otherwise than sincere: I could wish that he had not so many debts, and that this beautiful furniture was not so often in pawn; but the friend to whom I imparted all these truths, is not terrified at them, and still thinks it the best possible match for her relation, so that this sincerity will spoil nothing. I long to know how M. de Grignan does. Is not the Chevalier at Balaruc?

You give me a good idea of Pauline's economy, to say no more; it is pleasant to see her act naturally as to the preservation of her little pleasures; there is nothing to be feared in that respect from the name she bears. I would, however, exempt love from this tenacious hook, that carries with it an air of duty, and paints avarice without advantage; for such a hook must always be decreed, and all we gain by it, is the appearance of being too much attached to it. I have long been at war with these miseries, for it is the only prevailing passion here. I love Pauline; everything you tell me of her, gives me pleasure; I hope she will have her health, and that the waters will restore it, as well as Martillac's. Adieu, my child; I am very far from you, and very near you; I will not undertake to tell you how tenderly I love you: you may readily guess it, not only from my affection for your mind and your person, but also from the esteem and admiration I entertain for your heart, in which I hold so valuable a place.

LETTER 918

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Auray, Saturday, August 13, 1689.

The packet which I considered as lost, is arrived at its destination; I had great reason to regret it, for it contains particulars that interest me more than any; I should be sorry not to be informed of all the Mansions you build, and of the names which are so well suited to them.

We shall be at Rennes on Tuesday: our return is hastened two or three days, owing to the arrival of a courier, summoning M. de Chaulnes to Paris; his dispatches are said to relate to the affairs of the States, we shall see: but, at all events, he sets off immediately; I shall acquaint you with my destiny, and the day I return to my tranquillity at *The Rocks*. My son and his wife are at Rennes; we have within these three days taken one of the prettiest excursions in the world to Port-Louis, a beautiful place, whose situation is not unknown to you. You have always that fine extensive sea before your eyes; were you to turn them aside, you would behold the frightful countenance of M. de Mazarin [1]: out of so many places he might have commanded, he has fixed upon one where he is not the master, but his son; and which is besides in the government of M. de Chaulnes. There is no accounting for the extravagance of this man; he is mad, and dresses like a beggar; religion has turned his brain. We wanted to persuade him to send for his wife from England [2], where she is in danger of being expelled, or perhaps perverted, and where she remains with the King's enemies. He always says she may come to him; to him, good heavens! let us

[1] Armand-Charles de La Porte, Duc de Mazarin, was High-Bailiff of Haguenau, Governor of Upper and Lower Alsace, and the City and Castle of Brisach, etc.

[2] Hortense Mancini, Duchesse de Mazarin, and niece of the Minister and Cardinal of that name, died in England, July 2, 1699.

say with St.-Evremond, that she is excused from common rules; and that we see her justification, in seeing M. de Mazarin.

We went the next day, which was Thursday, to a place called l'Orient [1], which advances a league into the sea; here the merchants and merchandise from the East are received. A M. Le Bret, who is just arrived from Siam, and who has the care of this trade, and his wife who is just come from Paris, and displays more magnificence here than is to be seen at Versailles, entertained us to dinner; we made her husband give us an account of his voyage, which was very amusing. We saw a great quantity of goods, china, and stuffs, that pleased us highly. If you were not the Queen of the Mediterranean, I would have endeavoured to have got you a pretty stuff for a morning gown; but I should have thought it an insult. We returned at night with the tide and fine weather, and slept at Hennebon; your map will show you the situation of these places: it was yesterday, as we were setting out from thence, that the courier arrived, whom you will hear spoken of. To conclude, I fully understand the advantages you derive from this earldom, and with what pleasure you send money to Paris; this justice ought to preserve the Pope's health. I tremble every time a courier arrives: if God would continue the favour of his Providence for a few years, this would be grace indeed. Adieu, my child; I am hurried, and disturbed with noise: I will write to you from Rennes, and answer both your letters.

[1] L'Orient at this epoch was in reality nothing more than an accommodation-harbour for commercial vessels. It did not become a town till towards the year 1720, when all the different companies of maritime commerce were united in one, which the fictitious riches created by the system rendered powerful in a moment. The India company had existed for twenty-five years, at the period at which Madame de Sévigné wrote. But it had made very little progress, and the war which then broke out wholly destroyed it; this, however, did not prevent its director from displaying the greatest magnificence, and at the same time, perhaps, rendering him more opulent.

LETTER 919

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Rennes, Wednesday, August 17, 1689.

Indeed, my dear child, I have many things to tell you, and many to reply to. I shall resume my letter where the courier came to meet M. de Chaulnes at Hennebon. He brought a letter from the King, which I have seen, containing such orders as must command obedience, vigilance, and even impossibilities. The decisive style and manner, of M. de Louvois were easily recognised, which do not ask, "*Can* you take a journey to Rome?" He will neither allow delay nor excuses, he anticipates everything. The King says, "that he has resolved to send M. de Chaulnes to Rome, because he is the only man whom he thinks capable of effecting the greatest thing in Europe, by giving to the church a chief who may equally govern the church, content all the world, and France in particular; that he is informed that the Pope cannot live long; that the satisfaction he received from the two other exaltations made by M. de Chaulnes [1], answers for the success of this, which is the most important; that M. de Chaulnes must therefore set out immediately to receive his orders; that the French Cardinals will hold themselves in readiness; that Maréchal d'Estrées will be invested with the command of Brittany; that M. de Chaulnes's absence will not be of long duration; and that he will recall him as soon as there is a new Pope." M. de Croissi adds to all this, "that the King cannot doubt the success of an event of which M. de Chaulnes is to be the negotiator; that His Majesty, knowing that his affairs are not in good condition, will give what is necessary for so sudden and important a journey; that he must come; that the journey will be short, and so much to his honour that he is convinced M. de Chaulnes will joyfully obey: he is not however to mention it yet." Our

[1] This was M. de Chaulnes's third Embassy to Rome.

little corps is now therefore in sufficient motion; M. de Revel and I are confidants, enjoined to secrecy; M. de Chaulnes divided between the pleasure of feeling his vanity gratified by the preference shown him in this commission, which he is sent for from the utmost extremity of Brittany to execute, and which gives him the honour of a brilliant Embassy; and the regret of quitting the States, where there will be business of great importance, and where he might equally have served the King and the Province. Madame de Chaulnes sets no bounds to her sighs and tears; absence, a tedious journey, advanced age, she sings only a doleful ditty of these evils, without taking account of the greater evil, that they are penniless. Our return to Rennes is hastened two or three days; it is said that the King wishes M. de Chaulnes to be at Court before the States; those who have a good scent, smell out the drift of the journey to Rome. We slept at Auray, and dined the next day at Vannes. M. de Chaulnes appeared in the Parliament, as I told you, in compliment to the first President. Scarcely was he alighted from his carriage at the Bishop's, before the prelate said to him, "Sir, I ask you for my bulls [1]." The others said, "Sir, we are both rejoiced and afflicted." He made no reply, but dressed himself in black, and went to the Parliament; the first President, in the compliment he paid him, obliquely hinted at the honourable negotiation he was going to undertake; the Duc was embarrassed, and made an answer foreign to the subject; at length he returned, undressed, and dined. Madame de Chaulnes is overwhelmed with compliments: she constantly answers, that she knows nothing of the matter, that the King is his own master; so that we find our poor secret bandied about everywhere. We dined at the

[1] Pope Innocent XI. after his quarrel with France, had refused bulls to all the new bishops, without which they could not exercise their principal functions. The learned Huet, named at this time Bishop of Avranches, was by this means long deprived of the enjoyment of his dignity. Coulanges, being at Rome a short time after, wrote a song upon these bulls, which was admired by everybody except the Pope, who apprised him that he could not endure raillery upon such a subject.

Bishop's, where there was one of the finest and most sumptuous entertainments I ever beheld; we set out after dinner, which was Saturday; slept on Sunday six leagues from hence; and on Monday, the better day the better deed, we arrived at Rennes. I undertook, upon the road, to set forth to Madame de Chaulnes the agreeable side of this Embassy; and suppressed, or endeavoured to suppress, all other considerations; I believe I succeeded. We made M. de Chaulnes give an account of his different journeys to Rome, and found him to possess so great a share of understanding, so well adapted to negotiation in that country, where he is still adored, that we applauded His Majesty's nomination. He said, that if it had been to make peace with the Pope, he would have refused, knowing what an injury it would have been to you; but that he would entreat you to consider, that he would not work against you, till death had worked against the Pope; so that it would be death, and not he, that would do all the harm; that he would see you; that he was delighted to think that, after all the follies he had told you respecting his journey to Rome, it should really take place; this was a long and cheerful dissertation. Madame de Chaulnes is to set out two days after him; I believe his departure is fixed for to-morrow. The Duchesse wants to take me with her, she says you wish it; she is really sorry to leave me; we make reflections upon the unexpected dispositions of Providence. We were to have passed the winter here; I was to return for a month to *The Rocks*. I promised to go in the beginning of October to St.-Malo, then to the States, then again for a short time to *The Rocks*, then to Rennes from Lent till after Easter; and instead of this, in four days M. and Madame de Chaulnes will have left the country; I shall go to *The Rocks* with your brother and his wife, and shall spend the winter there more agreeably than anywhere else, being deprived of the company of these good Governors. I have sent, and shall again send, a little money to Paris; this retreat to *The Rocks* is my county, and this just payment of my debts shall con-

stitute my happiness. I shall have the pleasing prospect of meeting you next year at Paris: this is my hope, and it is all I implore of heaven; for I am undeceived with regard to the schemes of man. I am convinced that M. de Chaulnes, in speaking to the King of Brittany, will propose my son for the deputation, and I do not believe this post will be refused him; I know he wishes to procure us this pleasure, he loves to surprise agreeably. Madame de Chaulnes is as desirous of it as I am. I will some day relate to you how handsomely and how affectionately she has behaved to me; but this is at an end, and it is happy for me that I am partial to *The Rocks*, to those to whom they belong, and to the life they lead there. I find myself in my natural state, which I will never quit but for you.

I gave your letter to M. de Chaulnes, who showed it to us; it is excellent: and I do not comprehend how a person who praises me for answering trifles so well, can think her answers to those of the Duc should be either dull or insipid. I tell you that you judge wrong, for you treat these things in the only proper way, and with the greatest possible sprightliness. Revel was greatly astonished at your style.

If M. de Lavardin's [1] countenance alarms you, many are affected by it in the same manner; he does not, you find, return to Rome. He will not hold the States, because he would not be under the command of M. d'Estrées; he acknowledges only the Governor; so that probably M. de Revel will supply his place under the Maréchal.

If you see M. de Chaulnes either at Grignan or at Avignon, I request you, my beloved child, to make him some acknowledgments of friendship and gratitude, for all he has done for me; it is thus I beg you to pay my debts. M. de Grignan will be delighted to do him the honours of his government; I am sensible you know what to do and to say, when you please; so that, in adding my prayer, my mind is at rest.

[1] M. de Lavardin was Lieutenant-General in the government of Brittany.

LETTER 920

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, August 21, 1689.

Here I am, then, once more at *The Rocks* you so much dread, and which have nothing formidable in them. There is no longer a Duc or Duchesse de Chaulnes in this country: they left me with great regret; they wanted to set me down at the place where they took me up [1], and I did violence to myself in refusing them; but my journey would have been useless, if it had been so short, and I endeavour to render it otherwise now I am here: upon such occasions, *the heart declares for Paris, and reason for Brittany.* At length, my child, the struggle is over; it cost me some tears to see this good Duchesse set out. She would not, however, bid me adieu; but I was awake, and I was touched with the situation in which I left her; for the brilliancy of this preference, and this Embassy, which she is perfectly acquainted with, does not prevent her from being uneasy lest this long journey should prove fatal to her husband; he has been twice at Rome, but he is now twenty-three years older than when he last returned from thence. She is a woman of the greatest sensibility, notwithstanding the air of indifference she assumes, and which you are so well acquainted with. You may hence conclude, my dear child, that there was nothing to be seen or heard but tears and sighs, in quitting Rennes last Friday, and all the night she was here, whither M. de Revel accompanied her: she set out very early yesterday morning; and makes long stages, because she wishes to meet M. de Chaulnes again, who will be at Versailles to-day; so that this journey will, in every respect, be fatiguing to her. When she is at Paris, new objects, business, and

[1] At Paris.

friends, may console her; but she was quite overwhelmed here. I must tell you, by the bye, that Revel, who is a connoisseur, is delighted with this desert, and the variety of its walks. He set out this morning. M. de Chaulnes told my son, that the deputation would perhaps be more certain, by the audience the King would give him for Brittany, than if he had remained here to hold the States. We therefore expect to hear from him; if he sends us good news, which he wishes as much as we do, my son will accompany me to Paris next spring: I impart these ideas to you as they have been imparted to us, and by God especially. When we return to Maréchal d'Estrées, who remains at Brest, and who was compelled to retire from the fleet in which he was stationed, and see it sail under the command of M. de Seignelai, I must acknowledge, that the most refined policy would pronounce the agitations of the Maréchal's mind to have been the highest disgust a man of that dignity could express. But the King, who was acquainted with the destiny of M. de Chaulnes, might think of consoling the Maréchal by the command of the place in the absence of the Governor; as it was impossible, however, that M. de Chaulnes could, at the same time, command at Brest and in the other parts of Brittany, Maréchal d'Estrées was very naturally with his ships and the garrisons of the two Bishoprics, where he had two regiments under his command. This had not the air of superseding the Governor; the service required his acting thus; it was never intended to mortify M. de Chaulnes, during his stay in Brittany; and if the Maréchal had waited, a general officer would have been left at Brest, with the command of the ships that are always in the road, and such as might come in; which will be the case while the Maréchal commands in Brittany, and holds the States and M. de Revel under him. I have already told you, that M. de Lavardin is, at present, invested with no other post than that of Commandant, in the place of M. de Chaulnes. We have heard that the capricious humour of the Maréchal, of which the King was informed, and which

occasioned a misunderstanding with all subordinate to him, was the real cause of the order he received in the King's own hand to remain at Brest. M. de Pommereuil has, perhaps undesignedly, contributed to this, in giving an exact account of what he had seen; the departure of our Governors has thrown him into despair; he loved them, and was on very good terms with them: the case is different with the Maréchal. They none of them knew the manœuvre of the States; it is, therefore, to be hoped, that M. de Chaulnes will hold them with the King and his Ministers at Versailles, and will send them back with all due regulations. This is the way we reason in the country. M. de Pommereuil, who is temporary Judge-Advocate for the troops, will be invested with a particular commission for the States; his son-in-law is second Commissary; there are always two of this kind while the States are held. I think, my dear child, that I have said more upon this subject than is necessary or desirable: this inundation of words is occasioned by my not having received your letter. Do not fear that I shall turn hermit; my son would prevent this, as well as a thousand visitors he will have, who are, perhaps, too numerous. It is the finest weather imaginable, and I am going to resume my avocations, my reading, my walks, but no evening dews; make yourself easy respecting your dear mamma, who preserves herself for you; preserve yourself for her. Give my compliments to the Chevalier, upon the new dignity conferred on M. de Beauvilliers [1]; the King has entirely adopted the Chevalier's sentiments upon this occasion. Thus His Majesty makes three Messieurs de Beauvilliers of a single man; this is just what ought to have been done; St. Louis himself could not have made a better choice. The Abbé de Fénélon is another extraordinary personage, for talents, knowledge, and piety. I heartily rejoice with the Chevalier, whom I suppose to be at Balaruc. Do the waters

[1] Paul, Duc de Beauvilliers, was named at that time Governor to the three Princes, sons of the King's brother. François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénélon was appointed their Preceptor, and afterwards created Archbishop of Cambray.

continue to benefit Pauline and Martillac? and is fortune still favourable to the India company, in letting them play a winning game?

LETTER 921

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, August 24, 1689.

We hear from Paris, that M. de Chaulnes was expected with impatience; he ought to have arrived there on Sunday the twenty-first of this month. The Pope, our dear Holy Father, who left us that lucky county, was, according to the last advices, at the point of death; so that you will have M. de Chaulnes with you soon. Madame de Chaulnes, who travels very fast, and makes long stages, notwithstanding the intense heat of the weather, hurries in vain, for she will arrive too late. It was said, that Cardinals de Bouillon and Le Camus [1] would not be of the journey; but this news does not appear to me to be well founded.

It is certain that M. de Lavardin is coming to hold the States; I am delighted at this for his mother's sake, who seemed more affected than himself at his receiving no favour; here, thank God, is an excellent appointment for him, at which all Brittany will rejoice. In this case, Maréchal d'Estrées will have the command, with the exception of the States, so that I see no place for M. de Revel. I must own, that we have been very much exposed to the merit of the latter; but we have not fallen a sacrifice to his figure; all we have done in his favour, is to comprehend that he has been beloved by a variety of women, and we are contented with being his confidants. His eloquence has not seduced, it has only amused, us; we could not help sometimes admiring the singular harmony

[1] Cardinal de Bouillon, Turenne's nephew, was still in exile, as has been seen elsewhere; and as to Cardinal Le Camus, I conceive he was never thought of, as he owed his hat to the favour of Innocent XI.

of his periods, with a voice as hoarse as the braying of an ass; the rage of de La R**** [1], like that of Medea, is admirable; the manœuvres of Champmêlé, to preserve all her lovers without depreciating the parts of *Atalide*, *Bérénice*, or *Phèdra*, made us travel over thirty leagues very pleasantly; war came in its turn, the passage of the Rhine, the battle of Senef, campaigns with M. de Turenne, without reckoning the whole extent of Savoie. Here, you see, are plenty of materials; but I must now praise him, because, in all his recitals, we have never found him swerve from truth, to raise an altar to his vanity; so that we have still to ask whether he has a good reputation for courage, this being a chord he has never touched upon [2]; and if the Chevalier de Grignan wishes to tell me what he thinks upon this subject, I am still ready to take whatever impression he may choose to give me. The Marquis and I have agreed to attend to the Chevalier, with regard to the reputation of courtiers, as to an oracle; and to bestow our esteem, or the contrary, according to his decision. I am still of the same way of thinking, and so I believe is the Marquis; I entreat him, therefore, to tell me how I should consider M. de Revel [3]. My opinion seems to be perfectly fixed, with regard to the Marquis's merit, his industry and emulation are his vouchers. Never was there such a happy presage: *God preserve him, God preserve him.*

I should be delighted to have a portrait of Pauline; bring one with you; I am sure she will please me. I have

[1] See the note in Letter 929, of 21st September, 1689, in the seventh volume.

[2] Courage is like birth; those who are constantly boasting of the one or the other are naturally suspected of imposition. Those, on the contrary, in whom valour or nobility is not equivocal, not only lose nothing by their silence, but gain by leaving to others the charge of doing honour to truth.

[3] Charles-Amédée de Broglio, Comte de Revel, Lieutenant-General of the King's armies, afterwards Knight of his Orders. He was the brother of Victor-Maurice, Comte de Broglio, Maréchal of France, and uncle of François, Duc Maréchal de Broglio.

It was he who, in the campaign of 1702, saved Crémona, and retook it from Prince Eugène, at the very moment in which the latter had taken it by surprise, with his presumptuous General, Maréchal de Villeroi.

a tolerably good idea of her; I take a little of the Comte des Chapelles, a little of the Grignan beauty, and with these compose a very pretty personage, with a noble air, with a fine understanding, and an understanding which sits well upon her; and I caress and embrace her cordially. Preserve yourself, my dear Comtesse, for your family, your son, and your mother. I do not prohibit your eating melons, since you have such good wine to mellow them. M. de Chaulnes forbade them to me in your name, and I submitted, because they were not good; but he was obliged to let me perspire; and I returned at night to Auray, after a moderate walk, just as if I had come from playing a game at tennis. I changed my dress, and came to supper cool and refreshed; I laughed at myself the first, that others might not laugh at me; and with this I am in perfect health. It was very hot, and I have always been subject to perspiration; and I think it best, not to seek to change one's constitution: I do not think this should be styled an *effervescence*; my pot did not boil more fiercely, and there was no occasion to scum it oftener than usual. I think I told you that M. de Chaulnes spoke to us several times very kindly about the deputation, saying it was his business, and I expect to hear some news respecting it shortly. My son is gone upon a visit of pleasure four leagues from Rennes. He read that part of your letter the other day, where you say, you wish me with you. "Yes, doubtless, I wish it; I have as much right to her as THE REST. Adieu to THE REST." This appeared to him so humorous, that he laughed most heartily. As THE REST appeared dry, and then came *adieu* to THE REST.

I ardently wish that M. de Grignan's disorder may have left him. I perceive your uneasiness, which is not trifling, and it is a miracle that your health can support it. The match between Mademoiselle Le Camus and Madame de Maison's son, appears to me a very proper one: M. d'Arles will be present at this wedding, upon his return from the waters.

LETTER 922

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, August 28, 1689.

I have not received your letter, and I shall receive two at once to-morrow; I know not what to do with this interruption, which often happens. It is unfortunate that it should occur when I was waiting with so much impatience for news of M. de Grignan, whose illness will, I hope, be attended with no dangerous consequences; I cannot, however, help being very uneasy respecting him: the time seems long from Friday noon to Monday noon. I have just received a letter from the Marquis, who is a wing or a foot of you, which has given me pleasure. The dear little Captain tells me, he remembers that it is an age since he wrote to me. He gives me his reasons for not writing so often as he could wish to do; mentions M. de Boufflers'[1] friendship for him, and maintains that he is indebted for it to me. He tells me the news of his camp, their hopes of finishing the campaign by joining some army; sends a thousand remembrances to his uncle and aunt: his style begins to be formed, and so much good sense appears throughout his letter, that, I say more than ever, like flint and steel, his genius only wants to be struck, to produce every desirable spark. And see how bright his military disposition has shone, early as it was struck: could we ever have supposed that so laborious a profession would suit his taste? He has displayed application, vigilance, emulation, courage, in short, everything; it seems to be his destined vocation; he is a dear, amiable child. *God preserve him*, for I can never conclude in any other way.

But, my dear child, God has not preserved this Pope, who was so essential to your life and to your comfort:

[1] Louis-François, Marquis, (since Duc) de Boufflers, Peer and Maréchal of France.

Avignon, whose good fruits you had just begun to taste, is going to disappear. I think of nothing but your interest; for I set Europe and politics out of the question, and thought, if the Holy Father's days had been prolonged as much as those of M. d'Arles, it would have been a great blessing: but we are not the disposers of events; this we feel every instant; and we must bow down to the hand of Omnipotence. M. de Chaulnes arrived on Sunday the twenty-first at Versailles, where, I learn, he met with a very gracious reception from everybody, the King having set the example. I know not whether he has had time to enter upon the affairs of Brittany, and the deputation; it was his intention, and it is his business, since, if my son is appointed, it will be seen that he is the master; if not, the contrary will be equally evident, and this cannot be a matter of indifference to him: he has always spoken to us unreservedly in these terms; with us he displays neither the Governor nor the Ambassador. We expect news of this deputation, however, with less impatience than that of M. de Grignan's health. Madame de Chaulnes must have arrived yesterday at Paris; and it must have been precisely to-day, or yesterday (Saturday), that M. de Chaulnes must have set out; this is keeping time very nicely. The King has given him fifty thousand livres to defray the expenses of his journey, which is very handsome; we did not expect so much. Coulanges accompanies him to Rome; he has written me a long parting letter, in which he talks much of you. This must be a pleasant journey in so fine a season of the year. The good Pope died on the twelfth, the King has received official notification of the event: the question now is, the Ambassador and the Cardinals are expected. This seems to me the epoch, which will terminate Cardinal de Bouillon's misfortunes; but Cardinal Le Camus does not go; how comes this? My dear child, I am sorry on account of his brothers, whom we love, and who love us. M. de Lavardin holds the States; he would not be sorry to give us this deputation. I know not what Maréchal d'Estrées will do

during the meeting of the States; this is the finest part of his command. Adieu, my beloved; I do not pretend to tell you news, I merely talk of what occurs. M. de La Garde is so well informed by the Marquise d'Uxelles [1], that you know more than those at Paris. The Marquis d'Uxelles fills a great post at Mayence [2]. We expect intelligence here of our fleet; it has been a long time at sea.

I no longer know where I am at Grignan; I could not play at blindman's-buff there, I know not whom I have to deal with. Has M. de Carcassonne taken the Chevalier to Balaruc? Is M. de La Garde at home? You will pay my compliments to all, as you see occasion. I always embrace M. de Grignan, and wish him perfect health. I do not tell you, my child, all I wish you, I should be lost in a labyrinth of different wishes: I am not less terrified than yourself at our long separation; but it is the will of God, and our business requires it. My son, his wife, this pleasant habitation, company sometimes, books, conversation, walks; and at Rennes in Lent: all this will have passed, and a portion of life with it; which is a painful reflection to those who have lived long; but we must have fortitude, and make a merit of the impossibility of doing better.

[1] Marie de Bailleul, Marquise d'Uxelles, was mother of Nicolas du Blé, Marquis, and afterwards Maréchal d'Uxelles.

[2] The city of Mayence was besieged by Prince Charles de Lorraine. It was invested on the thirtieth of May, and the trenches were opened on the twenty-second of June. The Marquis d'Uxelles had the command, but, after making a vigorous defence, he was obliged to capitulate on the 8th of September following, for want of powder and muskets.

THE END OF THE SIXTH VOLUME.